Life in His Name

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Arthur and Esther
Christmas 1978
From Emil

LIFE IN HIS NAME

Meditations on Christian Experiences Based on the Gospel by John

BY

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AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN, PUBLISHERS
1928

TO THE MEMORY OF

MY PARENTS

WHO IN INFANCY BROUGHT ME TO GOD
IN BAPTISM AND FAITHFULLY INSTRUCTED ME
IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JESUS SO THAT I MIGHT
ENTER INTO THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF
THE "LIFE IN HIS NAME"—THIS LITTLE
BOOK IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.

Preface

For a number of years I have been giving the substance of the following meditations in the form of chapel talks to the students at the Lutheran Bible Institute. It is at the urgent request of many who have heard them that I am now sending them out in the form of this little book. I realize fully that they are not a finished literary product. I am letting them go out very much in the form in which they have been spoken, hoping that they might be spontaneous like a spoken message. I also feel that there is a need for messages which speak simply but earnestly to our young people concerning the experiences of the Christian life.

In preparing these talks through the years, I have done much reading of Rosenius, Hallesby, Skovgaard-Petersen, Rinman and Andrew Murray, and I am greatly indebted to their writings for what I have set forth in these meditations.

Oh, if the Holy Spirit could use these pages to lead some soul to the assurance of faith in Christ Jesus!

S. M. M.

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Ye May Have Life

The twentieth chapter of the Gospel by John closes with this summary:

"Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name."

"Life in His name." Here you have the gospel in a nutshell, "ye may have life in His name." How gracious God is when He gives us that announcement. It assures us of the possibility of life. It assures us of the possibility of a life in union with God for which we will not have to depend upon ourselves nor upon anyone else that is human, but entirely upon God. "Ye may have life in His name." That is, we may have that life that is in God. Then also, He does not expect us in any way to earn or merit or by our own strength lay hold of that life, because He says, "Ye may have it." He is giving it.

The fact that God says that we may have life, presupposes that we do not have life unless He gives it to us. We read in Jn. 5. 25, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the

dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

Of whom does God speak when He speaks of the dead? Does He mean those that are dead in their graves? No, because immediately afterward God says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

This proves plainly that in the first place when He spoke about the dead He did not mean those who are dead in their graves but others. He is speaking of those who are dead in trespasses and sins and that is why He also tells us in the Gospel by John, in His conversation with Nicodemus, that "except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God"—"that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and it has no other destiny than death. We must be born of the Spirit if we are going to have life with God.

Our Lord also says through the apostle John, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

"Who were born, not of blood." Let us think into

that. If I am to be a child of God I must have another birth besides that birth which brought me into this world, which is described by saying "born of blood." We are all of one blood, human blood. Human blood makes us brethren in this world and as far as life in this world is concerned human blood distinguishes us from any other life in this world. The Bible tells us that the life is in the blood and human life is in human blood just as animal life is in animal blood.

The world has a philosophy that says that there is a universal brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God. That is partly true and partly not true and that is why it is a dangerous doctrine. It is true that there is a brotherhood of man in that we are brothers in blood. That makes us one. But in relation to God we are not brothers because we are not all children of God. We are God's creatures, His handiwork, His creation, but not His children, for sin came in and spoiled the relationship of the children to the Father.

Remember how when Adam had sinned, he was afraid of God. He hid himself in the garden. He feared God's voice and His presence. Sin spoiled that wonderful relationship between God and man that had existed before. For God's original purpose and plan was that we were to be His children. And we were His children. But when we accepted the

will of the devil instead of the will of God, then we lost our sonship with God. And so everyone that is born into this world by human blood is not a child of God, but a child of sin, of condemnation and death.

"Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh." The flesh has a will, it has a life. As human beings in our natural state we can reason, we can desire and will, we can determine. There are great possibilities in human nature. Man can by his own genius advance himself wonderfully as far as this world is concerned. If he had not had such power he would not have been able to subdue creation and to do the marvelous things he now does.

But with all his skill, which is so far above the skill of the animal, he cannot attain to fellowship with God. He may build a tower and he may build it very high, and he may purpose by means of that tower to reach God, yes, enter right into heaven, but he will never get there.

It is very popular in our day to hold that men are made good and nice by their environment, that if they are only placed in a good environment they will become children of God. All children are thought to have the life of God in them; it only needs to be developed. Only discover the good and bring it out and you will soon have a child of God. This is certainly not the teaching of the Word of God, for it

says that there is nothing good in man, for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Therefore, you see, no amount of education will make children of God out of men because to be children of God they must have life, that life which comes from God, spiritual life, God-consciousness. That life they have not within themselves, it has been lost on account of sin.

"Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man." The apostle seems to make a distinction between the will of the flesh and the will of man. I think that by the will of the flesh he means our natural powers, but by the will of man he means man's determination. For man has a will by which he can decide certain things, by which he can hold before himself a certain purpose and strive for the fulfillment of that purpose.

Now a man might purpose to become a child of God and set out to make himself a child of God. He will never succeed, no matter how splendid be his determination. He cannot succeed because his nature is not on the same plane as God's nature. To use an illustration:—think of the will of God as a revolving wheel going in a perpendicular plane. When God created man in His own image, man also had a will that revolved in the same plane with God's will. But when man chose to yield to the will of the devil, then man's will was deflected and it is

impossible for him to cause his own will to turn back into the plane in which God's will moves.

No, man's will goes in another or deflected plane. Therefore, let him decide as much as he please that he is going to become like God, he is always deflected from the will of God. It is just as impossible for him to make himself like God as it is impossible for him to take hold of his shoes and lift himself up. It simply is outside of his power.

Therefore, if he is going to become a child of God, he must be born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." God must perform a miracle upon him. The power of God must be given him. The grace of God must come to him. He has to be born again.

It is wonderful to know that God wants us to be born again. It is wonderful to know that God has provided a way by which we can be born again. It is wonderful to know that it is God who wants to do that work of causing us to be born again so that we do not even have to be anxious about our ability to reach God. God Himself is going to carry out the work so that we may have life, not in any human name, but "life in His name."

Think what this means now when we see so many people about us who have never known the experience of being born again. Think what it means that they are dead in trespasses and sins.

When God saw that, His heart was moved with compassion, even from eternity. When He saw that man, whom He had created in His own image, would die because he chose to disobey the will of God, God's heart was moved with compassion and He determined that His life would again flow out to mankind, that a way would be provided by which man could again receive the life that flows from Him.

There has been deposited in our care, if we have seen that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, this blessed knowledge and there has been given to us not only the privilege but also the duty of letting this be known: "Ye may have life."

The Word Became Flesh

"That ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name."

We have seen that we do not have life in our own name, that God had to provide life for us—spiritual life—in addition to the life that we possess by nature. If we are to be children of God we must be born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

But in the passage which we are taking as the fountain passage for our meditations on the Christian life, it says "life in His name," which suggests the question, "Then who is He in whose name we may have life?" John says that he has presented the evidence by which we may know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, knowing and accepting the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, we ought to believe in Him so that believing "ye may have life in His name."

When John says that Jesus is the Christ, he immediately takes us to Old Testament ground, for the Christ means the "Anointed One" or "Promised One." His picture had been painted and drawn so

wonderfully in Old Testament prophecies and history. But the people of Jesus' day had not seen clearly in the Scripture (although it certainly was there) that it was to be the Son of God who would come and be the Christ. When Jesus asked them about the Messiah, whose Son He was to be, their answer was, "David's son." That part they had plainly and clearly seen. Then Jesus put this question to them, "How then could David call Him Lord when He said,

'The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit Thou on My right hand,
Till I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet'?"

How could David call Him Lord? He left that question for them to answer for themselves. Of course David could call Him Lord because, besides being David's son, the prophesied Messiah, He was, as John says, the Son of God.

What that means is clearly brought out in the Gospel by John. He begins his book by saying, "In the beginning was the Word," that is, the One of whom he speaks in his Gospel existed in the beginning.

"And the Word was with God," that is, the One of whom he speaks was in His pre-existence a person, for if He had not been a person He could not have been with God. He was not simply an abstract

idea that existed in the mind of God. No, He was with God as a living person who could commune and fellowship with God.

"And the Word was God," His Deity. And then a little farther on in the prologue we have "the Word became flesh," that is, the Word who was God. Therefore, we can say God became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

In parenthesis John says, "We beheld His glory," which means we beheld His Deity, "glory as of the only begotten of the Father." We beheld in Him that Shekinah glory that Israel saw in the pillar of fire and of cloud and in the glory of God which appeared over the ark and cherubim in the temple. We saw that glory of God in flesh in Jesus Christ.

Then, when God came in the flesh, what did He do? The Gospel by John gives us many pictures of God in the flesh. Shall we refresh our minds by just running through some of them?

When John the Baptist brings his first testimony in public concerning Jesus with Jesus present, we are told that seeing Him coming John says, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." If Jesus was to be a lamb, it was necessary that He have a body, for lambs to the Jews meant sacrifices, it meant that they had a life that was found in the blood and that their blood was shed, that is, their life was given instead of another life.

Even the psalmist of old, when he saw Christ and spoke of Him in the psalms said, "A body hast Thou prepared for me." When the Messiah came it was God that came and He was to have a human body and human life which He could give as a sacrifice. But if He was to take away the sins of the world it was necessary that He be God, for it was not possible for any mere human to take away the sin of the world, and therefore the "Lamb of God" gives us a picture of God in the flesh.

What a wonderful picture of God in the flesh in the fourth chapter. We are told that Jesus was on a journey. You remember that at noon He was tired and weary and sat down by the well. He has been walking, so that His muscles are weary and tired. He is hungry and thirsty. He sits down to rest. When a woman comes to get water He asks her for help to get a drink. In a few minutes He is telling that woman that He is able to give her living water; that He is able to cause a fountain of living water to spring up in her heart. That cannot be a mere man that speaks thus, for it is evident that He is talking about eternal life. Yet He is the same man that sat there and was tired and hungry and thirsty and had asked her to help Him to get water from that well for His body. It was God in the flesh. Jesus Himself had created all the water there was in the world and yet He was asking the woman to

help Him. So God condescended to come down and live with us in the flesh.

We will go to chapter six. You will remember that here we have the feeding of the five thousand, after which follows the discussion concerning the Bread of Life. Jesus says that He was the Bread of Life, the bread that had come down from heaven. This caused offense, and the Jews said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How doth He now say, I am come down out of heaven?" Jesus said they should not be offended at seeing Him there in the flesh, because that made it possible for God to feed mankind through Him. For it was God who had come through Him, so He says, "My flesh is the bread which I will give for the life of the world." God in the flesh! And it is necessary, He says, that "ye eat My flesh and drink My blood, otherwise ye have not life in you." It is necessary that we accept God in flesh and blood if we are going to have life.

Look at the wonderful picture in chapter eleven, where we are told of the sickness and death of Lazarus. Jesus, coming to the village, is met by Martha. Hear Him now say, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." Why, think if Jesus were only a man and said anything like that! You would

have to conclude that He was blasphemous or else He was out of His senses and did not know what He was saying. Only God can speak like that! Only God can say, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Then in a few minutes, having concluded His conversation with Martha, and she having returned to the house, we see Mary with Jesus. Mary is sobbing and weeping. The Jews standing around are questioning and wondering in their unbelief. Then we are told that Jesus wept. Tears are running down His cheeks! Then it says He troubled Himself. I think it really means He groaned and sobbed as He wept. And it is God in the flesh who is crying, with tears running down His cheeks and His frame shaking in sobs!

In a few minutes He is standing before the grave of Lazarus and shouting into that grave, "Lazarus, come forth." Lazarus has been dead for four days already, which, in Palestine, meant that His body had already started to decompose. Martha feared that, you remember. And Jesus tells him to come forth. By His word He brought about the restoration of life to Lazarus. It surely was God in the flesh, was it not?

Then think of the picture that we have in the nineteenth chapter, where they drag Him up to Calvary, lay His worn and tired body on the cross, nail Him and raise Him up. He thirsts and they give Him vine-

gar to drink. When His passion is finished He gives up the spirit. They did not take His life away from Him, though it was their intention and purpose to do that. We are even told that He shouted with a loud voice when He died. That is not the way most people die. He gave His life as a sacrifice. After His death John tells us that he stood under the cross and saw when a Roman soldier drove a spear into His side and there went out blood and water. It was a human body that hung there, but it certainly was more than a human being who died there.

And in the twentieth chapter (we cannot stop for all the pictures) we have one of the last ones. Think of Thomas saying, "Do you really believe that you saw Him? Do you really believe that He is risen from the dead? You say that you saw Him? Did you touch Him?" I am imagining Thomas' objections. You remember that Jesus invited them to see and feel that He was not a ghost. Perhaps they could not satisfy Thomas that they had touched Him, because Thomas says, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And then we are told that Jesus appeared again and stood in their midst when Thomas was there and He said to Thomas, "Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and see My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into My side: and be not

faithless, but believing." Why, that is still a human body that has been dead and is now alive again! It must be God then, because no human being ever died and came to life again by his own power and strength. So you see, Jesus still is God in the flesh, although His body now is glorified.

In the closing chapter of the Gospel by John, we have at least the suggestion that God in the flesh is coming again some day, for, when Peter asks about John, "What about this disciple, what is Thy will for him," He says, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" "He tarry till I come." God in the flesh is coming again, not to die for sin as He did the first time He came, but to judge and to reign in glory; the same God in the flesh who was seen here, now in glorified form, now perfect, now seated on the right hand of God the Father. This is the One who now to-day is a living Saviour, of whom John speaks when he says, "That, believing, ye may have life in His name."

Behold the Lamb of God

"The Word was God—the Word became flesh and dwelt among us—grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

Let us now think of the purpose of God's coming in the flesh. When God came in the flesh then there was a man in the world who could not fail. God created man in His own image, but the very first time he was put to a test, he failed. Now God came in the image of a man, that is, He took upon Himself manhood and human nature. The God-Man could not fail and after He had lived in the presence of the Jews for over thirty years and they challenged His claims, as we find especially recorded in the eighth chapter of John, He asked them openly and publicly, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" Just think of that, "I have lived in your presence, you have seen Me day in and day out, I have labored amongst you, now let any one who can, point out a sin in My life, let him stand forth and tell it." What a challenge!

He lived a perfect life. God Himself witnessed of Him and said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God was satisfied with this

man. There finally was a man in the world with whom God could be satisfied, for He observed perfectly the will of His Father. He says of Himself in the fourth chapter of John's Gospel, "It is My meat to do the Father's will." And in chapter eight: "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him."

This has great significance in realizing how there can be "life in His name." If there had not been a man who had lived a life, perfect, well-pleasing in the sight of God, there would not have been any salvation for man, for God could not give up His claim on man that man must satisfy His demands for holiness. God could not look through His fingers, pay no attention and just forget that man had fallen into sin. Then God would have denied Himself and there would have been no God. If man would be saved there had to be some man who would fulfill God's law, which demands a perfect holiness.

When John the Baptist witnessed to the multitudes about Jesus he cried out "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." We have already suggested that in order to be the Lamb of God it was necessary that Jesus be the Son of God so that He really could be God's Lamb. It was necessary that He be a man so that He have a life that He could give in sacrifice. For the life that He had in His pre-existence, that He could not give in death. No, He had to have a human life; He had to

have human blood in which the life dwelt, which could be spilled so that His life could be given instead of your life and mine.

Then we are also told by the Lord Himself, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life."

You remember the story of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness. You remember how Israel had sinned and on account of sin punishment came, they were bitten by the serpents and everyone that had the poison from the serpent in his veins died. Then God told Moses to make a brazen image of a serpent and raise that up in the wilderness so that men might look at it, with the announcement—and that is the important part—with the announcement and promise from God that if men would look at that serpent they would be healed.

Now Paul tells us that God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin in the flesh. That, I think, is what Jesus meant when He said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness." When the people were bitten by the serpents they became an illustration of how all mankind has been bitten by the serpent of sin and there is venom, the poison of sin in our lives. As sons of Adam there can be no other destiny for us but death. But now, as Moses was to make an image like the ser-

pent, so God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. As the serpent was to be raised up, so Christ was to be raised up, suspended on a tree in order that He might there in His flesh condemn sin in the flesh. That is, in His perfect, sinless life, which He gave for sin, He took away from sin its power to condemn. He paid there for the sin of all men.

Just as we all sinned in Adam potentially—that is, we were all in Adam when he sinned, for we have all come from the stream of life that started with Adam—so Christ had in Himself all His children when He died on Calvary. That is a glorious and wonderful teaching of the Word of God, out of which, I am afraid, we do not always get the comfort and the hope that we ought to get. Think of it now a little more closely. When Jesus died on Calvary there was in Him all His children. In that perfect man God was satisfied so that when He died His death was acceptable to God as a sacrifice for all mankind. God is willing to reckon that in this representative, this new head of the race, every man has paid for his sins, just as surely as every man is necessarily a sinner because he is born a son of Adam.

That is why Paul can say, "I have been crucified with Christ." Have you often been tempted to think that by saying that Paul meant that we must have some kind of feeling in which we feel that we have

been crucified with Christ? Why, every human being was crucified with Christ whether they feel it or not, for He was the second Adam and He was crucified on behalf of the human race. All have been crucified with Christ; all have paid for their sins in Christ and the salvation that is in Christ is for the world because God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

When a man believes in Christ he does not by his faith satisfy the demands of God's holiness. The demands of God's holiness were satisfied when Jesus died and that suffices for every human being that has ever lived or ever will live. There is nothing that man can do or must do in order to gain the good will of God. God has given His good will in His Son and provided the satisfaction of His own holiness for every man. When I entrust my soul by faith into His hands then that salvation becomes mine personally.

But now, our Lord Jesus Christ did not remain there on the tree. Thank God, after having been put in the grave He rose again from the dead. Just before Jesus tells Nicodemus "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life," He also tells him that "no one hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven."

But there is a Son of man now who has ascended into heaven. There is now seated on the right hand of God a human being, the second Adam, the new head of the race. He is the representative of the human race and at the same time He is God, seated on the right hand of God. And now there flows forth from Him to mankind a stream of eternal life.

He also draws men unto Himself. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." Wherever there is proclaimed the fact that Jesus died on Calvary for us, there is power from God to draw men to Christ. When He draws them to Himself He gives them grace to believe, to trust in Him in order that then by faith they may share the life that proceeds from Him.

Using a figure, He says of Himself, "I am the Vine and ye are the branches," to tell us thereby that just as the vine supplies the life to the branches, so Jesus sends out life to those who receive that life by Him.

I want you to observe that His grace is prevenient. That is, it goes ahead to draw men to Him and then as they are being drawn to Him He meets them in grace and offers them that for which He draws them.

Therefore we read in the first chapter of John's Gospel, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name, who were born, not

of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

And now I want you to notice these things: "to them gave He the right to become children of God."

What authority did Jesus have to give anybody the right to become a child of God? He had the authority based upon the perfect life that He lived and the perfect sacrifice that He made.

How can He cause them to be born again? He who rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God, He is the source of life and He can bring about in human hearts this miraculous experience that they are born again.

So then, when they bow before Him and admit that they ought to be hung upon the tree, that they are worthy to be cursed because they have broken the law of God and transgressed His will and they plead guilty, asking for His mercy, then He can forgive them and give them the right to become children of God. And when they receive that right, He has the power to go down into their inner life and work the miracle of regeneration there. That is how there can be "life in His name."

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7. 37–39.

Jesus also said, as it is recorded in the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel by John, "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: ye know Him; for He abideth with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you."

We now want to see how our Lord Jesus Christ shares His life with us. From the passages that we have read we see that before He left this world Jesus promised in some way to come to us again and when we compare these two passages, it is evident that it is through the Holy Spirit that He would come to us to share with us His life.

The first passage from the seventh chapter says

that the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified. By this is not meant that the Holy Spirit had not been in the world before Jesus was glorified. We know that in the story of creation we are told that the Spirit brooded over the waters, preparing them for the following creative acts. We know also that the Holy Spirit used men and women in Old Testament times as mouthpieces through whom He spoke words of direction and of promise, preparing a people for the coming of the Saviour. We also remember that the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary and there was begotten in her Jesus, who was the Son of God. We remember that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, preparing the way for the Saviour.

There also came a day in the life of Jesus, after He had lived at home with His relatives for thirty years, that He finished the last carpenter job that He had. He hung up His tools, swept up the shavings and the sawdust, arranged for the delivery of the job that He had finished and went in and said good-bye to Mary, His mother. He must have done something like that! Then He went down to the Jordan where John, His cousin, was preaching and baptizing. He asked John to baptize Him.

Then, we are told, "the heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended upon Him in the form of a dove." Which does not mean that He did not have

the Holy Spirit before, but that now the Holy Spirit dwelt in Jesus for the purpose of fulfilling His special ministry of salvation; and now there was fulfilled that of which we read in the Gospel by John, that "God gave his Son the Spirit without measure." Now the Holy Spirit was dwelling in a man on earth in a way that He could not dwell from the time of Adam to the time of this second Adam, for here was a perfect, sinless man in whom He could dwell with fullness of power.

The Lord Jesus, however, could not at that time share with mankind this precious gift of the Holy Spirit, because sin was in the way. He could use men, temporarily, so that they became, as it were, His hands and His feet through which He extended His service. When He then sent them out, He gave them the power of the Holy Spirit to do the things necessary for the ministry. But they could not themselves be the receptacles that would be filled with the Holy Spirit to overflowing. Sin was in the way.

But "Jesus bore our sins in His body on the tree" and paid for them. He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven. He thus was the high priest, who, having sacrificed Himself as the Lamb of God for the sin of the world, entered into the holy of holies, there to make intercession for us.

What did He pray for when He came there? In

the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel, He tells us what He was going to pray for when He came into the presence of His Father. He says, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth."

The Father heard and answered His prayer. In Acts, second chapter, we are told that Jesus received the promise of the Father and poured it out upon the world. This promise was the Holy Spirit.

Then there was fulfilled that which had been promised by type in the Old Testament in the anointing of the high priest. Jesus was the High Priest. He brought the sacrifice into the holy of holies which was acceptable in the sight of God. He was anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit and then that oil flowed down on His garments. We are His garments. Then the Holy Spirit was given to the world in a way that He could not be given before, because the sacrifice had not been made and because Jesus had not been glorified and come into the presence of God to make this request for mankind.

Now the Holy Spirit is in the world in a way in which He could not be in the world before Jesus' death and resurrection. That is why you and I are especially privileged to be living in this day. You remember that Jesus says of John the Baptist that, even though he was the greatest of woman born, and

even though it was said in the Bible that he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, yet, the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist and has a more wonderful privilege than John. For even though John was filled with the Holy Spirit, he was filled for the performance of a certain duty, and he did not have the privilege of having the Holy Spirit in his life in the sense that we have since Christ died, rose again and was glorified. We do not say that men could not be saved before Christ died. They could be saved and they were saved by believing in the promise of His coming. But they did not have the privilege of sharing His life and His power as all children of God may now share by the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit came, He would convict the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment.

The Holy Spirit would prepare men's hearts by showing them how awful their sin is; by not only causing them to see that, but also by causing them to realize it in their inner self to the extent that they would lie helpless in the presence of God and plead for His mercy. He would especially take the sin of their unbelief, the sin of their rejecting Christ, and use that to convict them of sin.

He would also show them that there is no right-

eousness that is acceptable with God but a perfect righteousness and that that righteousness no one but Jesus Christ has ever had.

He would also show them that without that righteousness there would be nothing but judgment for them and that they would share, with the devil, God's wrath.

Now the Holy Spirit is operating in the world to bring about this experience in men's hearts, and when He has, by means of the Word of God, thus brought them low, humbled them, crushed them, then He paints before them the picture of Jesus, the Saviour, and pleads and calls in their hearts, urging them to intrust their sin-sick soul into the hands of Him who died for them and now lives to make intercession for them. And when the crushed, helpless soul cries to Jesus and says, "Jesus, save me," then the Holy Spirit enters into that heart and brings in the life of Christ. He thus causes a new life to be born within that heart which has not been there before and which has its source in Christ, who is seated on the right hand of God.

Jesus also said, "He will take of Mine, and will give it unto you." And so, besides bringing us the life that is in His name, the Holy Spirit also brings us the peace and the joy that is Christ's. Not only does He tell us that there is such a peace and joy in the heart of our Brother, who is seated on the right

hand of God, but He actually, because He is one with God, is able also to transfer the same peace and joy that is in Jesus, now in heaven, into our hearts here on earth.

How wonderful to think that "life in His name" is something that God Himself is working in us. I am not expected to work repentance and faith in my own heart. Jesus has promised that the Holy Spirit will do it. I am not expected to force myself in some way to love Jesus and to work out peace and joy within myself. Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to do that.

Neither am I expected to work repentance in the hearts and lives of others. Oftentimes we human beings feel as though we would like to be the Holy Spirit and get on the inside of people's lives and work the work of repentance and faith there, but we cannot do that. It is not our work to do. It is the work of the Holy Spirit.

And, oh, there are many Christians who would have much more of joy and peace in their hearts if they really knew the Holy Spirit and His work. For I am afraid that there are many Christians who are like the Ephesians when Paul came to them and asked them, "When ye believed, received ye the Holy Spirit?"—and they answered, "We have not even known that there was a Holy Spirit." And yet the fact is that Jesus' great work of salvation was not

finished until He had sent the Holy Spirit. In and through the Holy Spirit Jesus Himself came again, not only to be *with* us but also, as He says, to be *in* us; and through the work of the Holy Spirit to share with us what He has now received in glory.

The Law was Given, Grace and Truth Came

"Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." John 16. 13, 14.

It is the Holy Spirit who works the process of "life in His name." In order to do that He uses means. It is evident from what we have read here now from the sixteenth chapter of John, that the means that He would use would be the Word. He was going to speak, not of Himself, but the things which He heard. He was going to declare all truth to men. Now the truth that the Holy Spirit uses is the Word of God. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life." The divisions of that Word are plainly indicated in the first chapter of John's Gospel. "The law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

The law was given through Moses. The contrast that is here made is not the contrast between that which is truth and not truth. We should not think that the law was not truth and that truth came first through Jesus Christ. No, the contrast lies thus: The *law* was given through Moses—*grace* and truth came through Jesus Christ. For in law there was no grace, but the truth, as revealed in Jesus Christ, was connected with grace. The law was all truth—God's truth, and the Holy Spirit makes use of the law. He has a purpose and a plan to work out by means of the law.

The promise, however, we are told in the Bible, came before the law, and the law, which came 430 years after, could not disannul the promise nor take the place of the promise. Salvation was to be by promise and not by law. The law came in besides, not to take the place of the promise but to do something in man to prepare him for receiving the fulfillment of the promise.

Now, what does the Holy Spirit do to-day by means of the law and the gospel? The law sets forth the holy will of God. The law says, "Be ye therefore holy as I am holy." The law says, "Cursed is everyone that doeth not everything that is written in this book of the law." The law has placed its demands upon men as high as God's own holiness. The law requires holiness, not only of

word, deed and thought, but requires holiness of motive and inclination, telling us that we must be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. And God never has yielded and never can yield one iota of that demand of the law. That is why Jesus said that not one single iota of the law should ever pass away and He did not come to set aside that law as far as its demands are concerned, but He came to fulfill the demands of that law.

The demands of the law still stand. There is absolutely no human being that can escape his responsibility before the demands of that law. The Holy Spirit makes use of that law as God intended it should be used, to show man how desperately hopeless his condition is if he is left to himself to attain to the holiness that God, in His holiness, must demand. "Do this and live the law commands; but neither gives me feet nor hands." We are asked to do something that we cannot do. We are commanded to be something that we cannot be because of indwelling sin, and the law shows absolutely no way out. The law leaves us, saying, "You are cursed if you cannot do and cannot be what I demand." That law has proceeded from the mouth of God and it is good and holy. And there is no salvation for any man who does not admit of the goodness and the holiness and the justice of that law with its threats.

There is an illustration of this in John's Gospel in the fifth chapter, where Jesus comes to Bethesda. He finds the multitude of lame and sick lying there amongst the pillars waiting for the movement of the water in the pool. He stands before the one who has been sick for thirty-eight years. What a type of sin-sick humanity! He asks that man, "Do you want to be made well?" And He receives the answer, "I have no man to help me to get down into the pool, but every time I get near it, somebody gets in ahead of me." That is, all my self-efforts to get into the pool, where I have hope of being saved, end in desperate failure.

That is an illustration of the law, "Do this and thou shalt live." But every time I come somewhere near doing it, something else gets in the way, and I am a failure. Now, then, the law has had its proper use in my heart when it has revealed to me my desperate failure.

There are improper uses of the law. Men use the law in these days very improperly. The law, for example, is proclaimed in such a way as to make men feel that they can by self-effort attain to the fulfilling of the law.

I once heard a sermon on the Fourth Commandment, a wonderful sermon, setting forth God's demands, the necessity of our obeying those demands, the blessings that follow from obeying His demands

in the Fourth Commandment. In setting forth the blessings it was said that they are both earthly and heavenly. Here on earth things will go well for us and we will have a long life if we obey God in the Fourth Commandment, that is, honor thy father and mother. And some day, after a long and useful life, we will appear in the heavenly home and the Father in heaven will bless us for having kept this commandment. There was not one indication that the preacher ever thought of the desperate failure of mankind in keeping even that commandment, which ought to be one of the commandments which would be the easiest for him to keep, in view of that he has his living experience in his home and in the care of his parents.

That sermon on the law would do one of two things, it seems to me. If it did awaken the conscience of any person, it would certainly leave him desperate, for if I am going to appear before my heavenly Father in a heavenly home on the basis of having kept the commandment, "Honor thy father and mother"—and I discover that I have not honored my father and mother, how shall I ever appear in the heavenly home?

Or, on the other hand, and I think this would be the most evident result of such a sermon, it was proclaimed in such a way that most people could say, "Well, I have done my best to obey my father and

mother. Oh, I may not have been perfect in it but I have tried to be a good child, and God has let me live thus far, which is a sign of His favor. No doubt if I just keep on this way and try to be a little better in my relation to my father and mother, as well as keeping the other commandments of the ten, I will some day get to heaven by being good."

And is not that what human nature has done to the demands of God's law? Tempered them, carved them down so as to make them fit, not God's holiness but our capability of fulfilling them, so that the self-righteous, natural man shall be able to say like the rich young ruler, "These things have I kept from my youth up."

But then the Holy Spirit through the Word of Jesus will come and put His finger on some sore spot and say, "What about that?" "Go, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor." And you remember that the young man went away sorrowful, for he had much wealth and he had not kept from his youth up what he thought he had.

I have been speaking now of those who are not awakened but are in their natural state and whom the Holy Spirit desires to awaken by the law. It is through such things that they escape the point of God's sword and are not humbled before Him.

Christians, too, make the wrong use of the law in their own lives. Whereas, through Christ Jesus

they have been delivered from the bondage of the law, they so often go back in under its bondage. They permit the law to worry them in their conscience and get into an attitude towards the law in which they have the feeling that their relationship with God depends upon their fulfillment of the law. Whereas the Holy Spirit has taught every Christian that grace and truth came through Jesus Christ and if we want to continue in grace and truth, we never can do it through the law, because there is no grace in the law.

> "Do this and live, the law commands,
> But neither gives me feet nor hands.
> A better word the Gospel brings,
> It bids me fly! and gives me wings!"

Now, what is the grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ? Why, it is what we have already set forth in these studies. Jesus in His perfect life fulfilled the demands of God's holiness in His perfect sacrifice. He paid for the sins of all the world against God's law. In His life now on the right hand of God He pours out life to mankind and grace and mercy, so that everyone who will admit of the judgment of the law of God and appeal to God for mercy, for Christ's sake, is judged before God, not on the basis of "Have I or have I not fulfilled the law?" but on the basis of "Did Jesus or did He not fulfill the law?" And as long as I plead

guilty to failure in fulfilling the law and ask for the mercy that is in Christ, God, as far as my relationship to Him is concerned, never asks, "Has this man to-day kept the law?" His only question is, "Does this man to-day plead guilty and ask for mercy for Jesus' sake?"

For "if we walk in the light as He is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another (that is, with God as well as with all who walk in this light), and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." But, you say, if I to-day in my weakness have failed and broken one of God's commandments, have I then fallen out of grace so that I am judged by that law? No, not if you will confess your failure and ask for the mercy that is in Christ Jesus. God will judge you, not according to the law but according to Jesus' fulfillment of the law on your behalf.

Oh, what deliverance there would be for many souls if they only once would permit the Holy Spirit to show them Jesus as their Deliverer from the bondage of the law! They still are in bondage to the law, even though they have asked God for mercy in Christ, because they do not permit the Word of God to set them free in the freedom that there is in the Son, for "whom the Son makes free, he is free indeed." Whom the Son makes free is free from the curse of his sin; he is free from the guilt of sin; he

is free from the stain of sin; he is free from the curse of the law; he is free from the bondage of sin; he is free from the bondage of the law; he is as free as Christ Jesus is free. He has been bidden to fly, and God, in grace, has given him wings to fly, namely, faith.

So then, the Holy Spirit, in order to work the ministry of "life in His name," kills us by the law—that is, kills all self-confidence and self-trust and raises us up again into the life that is in Christ Jesus in the promise that there is all forgiveness and salvation in Him.

Life's Beginning

Life must be lived. That sounds like a truism, anybody ought to know that. And yet it is necessary to emphasize it when we speak of "life in His name." For there actually are those who seem to think that "life in His name" is a theory; a definition that you have memorized and can repeat, or the acceptance of certain facts as being true. But "life in His name," just as all life, must be lived. "Life in His name" must have birth, must have growth and development, must have nourishment, must have opportunity to express itself in some way and must in every phase be experimental.

The question then arises—when do we begin to live "life in His name"? We have already seen from the Gospel by John and other portions of Scripture that we do not begin to live "life in His name" when we begin to live our natural life at birth. But the Word of God tells us that "as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name"—from which it is evident that we begin to live the "life in His name" when we meet Jesus and receive Him. Then the question arises—when are men first in

condition to meet Jesus and receive Him? Does it require a certain age? Does it require a certain experience? Or is it possible to meet Jesus from the earliest days of life and receive Him and begin experimentally to live the "life in His name"?

I am fully convinced that I first met Jesus when I as a babe was baptized. Jesus also met me and worked in me the grace to receive Him, whereby I became a child of God. That occurred in the holy baptism. Now let me remove from your mind and heart any obstacles that may be there in accepting what would certainly to me appear to be the clear teaching of the Word of God, that a babe can receive Jesus in baptism and then begins to live the "life in His name."

Some say that an infant does not need to be baptized in order to meet Jesus, for the infant has not deliberately and consciously rejected the grace that is in Christ Jesus and therefore the infant is saved anyway without receiving baptism. But what then will you do with such a clear statement that "except one be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God"? Will you not have to admit then that if a babe is to enter into the kingdom of God that babe must be born anew? For "except one be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."

Evidently, then, if a babe is to enter into the kingdom of God, that babe must be born again. How will he be born again? "Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And what is the medium that God uses, the means of grace by which men are born again? Plainly it is stated in the Scripture that we are born of an incorruptible seed, which is the Word of God. Therefore, an infant, too, if it is going to be born again and be saved, must be born of the Word of God.

And how shall the Word of God be brought to the infant when the infant has not the natural powers to receive the Word in understanding? God provided for that in the baptism, in which the Word of God is given to the individual.

Then someone says, "You have yourself admitted that an infant has not the capacity to understand the Word of God—how then can the infant receive Christ in the baptism when the infant cannot believe?"

But I will not grant that the infant cannot believe. Who has said that? Where in the Bible does it say that an infant cannot believe? When I have said that to people, I have often been answered, "But you yourself know, do you not, that an infant cannot believe? Do you have to be told that?" But I insist, my opinion is that an infant can believe. But perhaps we should rather put it this way, that an

infant can have faith, in view of the fact that some people in these days put a special significance in the word "believe," that you must have a conscious understanding of what you have accepted in faith. So I will say that I am fully convinced that an infant can have faith.

You see, the misunderstanding is simply in what faith is. There are those who have the notion that faith is conscious intellectual understanding, but it is not so stated in Scripture. Then you could not have faith when you are asleep, could you? Because when you are asleep you cannot consciously understand. How about those who are unconscious or are under an anesthetic? Can they have faith while they are unconscious? I am fully convinced that they can. Because, what is faith? "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name." So faith means "to receive Him."

But you who say that an infant cannot believe, let me ask you, "Can an infant be saved?" Oh, yes, it is said, an infant can be saved. How can an infant be saved when it cannot believe and the Scripture plainly says that "by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God"? And also that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Wherefore, if an infant is to be saved it must have faith.

How can an infant have faith? Because it is the gift of God. Who will limit God and say that God cannot give faith to an infant because an infant cannot understand?

Sometimes analogies help us: Legally, we are all ready to admit that an infant can receive. Its parents may die. The infant is recognized by the law, even though it have no understanding, and may receive an inheritance. I grant you that the inheritance is put in the hands of a guardian, but the guardian is under the law to see to it that the infant receives the inheritance when he is of age.

On the day of its birth an infant can receive physically. It has a mouth and digestive system by which it can not only receive but also assimilate the food which will cause the body to grow.

Now if the human laws recognize an infant and if it has received physically the power to receive, why should I think that spiritually an infant cannot receive Christ, even from the day of its birth, or receive faith, which is a mouth by which Christ is received. I am fully convinced that God who gave the infant a mouth and the digestive organs for its body, also can give the infant a spiritual hand and mouth by which the infant will receive Christ.

And looking at it from the positive Word of God rather than from this negative approach, we have the plain statement of our Lord Jesus Christ that

we should "suffer the little children to come unto Me, for to them belongeth the kingdom of God." God has intended that they should enter into the kingdom, but He has also definitely stated that "except ye be born again, ye cannot enter into the kingdom." Also, He has said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

There might be somebody who will now say, "Baptism does not save them anyway." And yet our Lord has said that we should "baptize them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." What does that mean to be "baptized into the name of the Triune God"? Once I thought those words to be only a sort of formula used in baptism, and I wonder if that is not all they mean to most people. But if you study what the Bible says about "His name," you will understand that it means something which is much more than that. For, you remember that our seed passage for these meditations is that "believing ye may have life *in His name*"—and when we were baptized into the name of the Triune God, we were baptized into a life union with the Triune God. That is what baptism is.

Paul says in Col. 2. 9–13: "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality

and power: in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you I say, did He make alive together with Him."

Here you have a very direct comparison between the rite of circumcision and the rite of baptism. And we remember that circumcision took place at the age of eight days. The infant was to be circumcised, and here we are told that there is another circumcision now which is the circumcision of Christ received in baptism. In that baptism what we experience is that we are buried with Him and also raised with Him. Yes, that we are made alive together with Him.

From which I want to draw the personal application, comfort and hope that when I was brought to God in baptism, I became a sharer of "life in His name." That life I then shared in a subconscious state—I could not think about it, I could not reason it out. It was not necessary that I think and reason about it. As my natural powers developed, God also intended that this "life in His name" should develop and grow. Thus when we in infancy were

brought to God in baptism, we, by His grace, being absolutely helpless in ourselves, began to share "life in His name."

And an additional thought. No adult can share "life in His name" except on exactly the same basis: "but except ye be converted and become as little children (or as infants), ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." That is, that you and I, who are in danger of thinking that we are something and that we can do something in order to obtain life, must come to this understanding and to this experience, that we lie just as helpless as a babe in the hands of God, and that God then, after all resistance on our part and all attempts to help ourselves have been broken down, by His grace shares His life with us.

The Child's Life In His Name

How does the baptized child live the "life in His name"? We have said that life must be lived. We have also said that the infant through baptism received "life in His name," so you see that we must also ask and answer the above question.

Now, it is a fact known to us all that we live much of our life in a subconscious way. The early years of our life are lived more in the subconscious than the later years. The baby lives almost entirely in a subconscious state. That is, he is not thinking and reasoning about the things that happen to him. He is not self-conscious. He eats but he does not reason about eating. He sees but he does not even know what he sees. He uses his voice but he does not know what he says. He waves his arms but does not know for what he waves them. He goes through many reflex actions—when you put your finger into his hand he is bound to grasp your finger. It is not because he thinks, "I have a finger in my hand, I am going to hold it." It is not because he is glad to see you and feels good toward you and wants to shake your hand. It is a mechanical nerve reaction. He is bound to do that. The nerves and

the muscles act that way when they have received the stimulus of the touch of something. He will grasp a stick as readily as your finger.

But as he grows he becomes more and more conscious of what he is doing, and the many unconscious and reflex actions become consciously directed actions, and that, I suppose, is one of the most wonderful and interesting studies that a human being can have, to watch the development of conscious life in a babe and see how he more and more consciously reacts to the outside stimulus that comes to him in this world.

But even we who are adults live much of our life in the subconscious. We sleep much of the time, or should. We do not get along very well in health, physical or mental, unless we have our portion of sleep in which we dip down into the subconscious and rest there and let the conscious life go. Some of us do not do that very well, so we have trouble in the conscious life. The soundest sleep is the sleep that has dipped all the way into the subconscious and let the conscious go entirely.

Then, too, there are so many of the functions of our life that operate entirely in the subconscious, and the more we can leave them there, the better off we are. Take, for example, the process of digestion. Chewing and swallowing is usually done without thinking about it. And if you think about it, you

might choke. That is why it is so hard to swallow a pill. After you have once swallowed, then the less you think about the digestive process, the better off you are. You all know that people who think too much about their digestion soon develop indigestion.

The same is true about the heart. It acts entirely automatically, and our Lord has so created us that we cannot regulate our heart beat. Try as hard as you will, you cannot make it go faster or slower by thinking. It is a muscle that keeps on working all the time and you do not have to think about it.

There are also many other processes that we do entirely in the subconscious state and much better than if we thought about them. Think how labored and difficult breathing becomes if you begin to think about the rate at which you should breathe. So you see, much of our life is lived subconsciously, and in the subconscious there may lie secrets of life that we have not thought about.

Now then, since we live so much of our life in the subconscious, there must also be room in the subconscious for the "life in His name." And there is. Just as the babe does not think about his natural life, so the babe does not think about the "life in His name," which he received in baptism. And yet it is just as real as his natural life is real, and God's intention and purpose is that, as the natural life develops and therefore its capacities develop, the spir-

itual life shall also develop and shall become more and more conscious.

What then does God want the child to experience in the "life in His name"? First of all, that he may know God, "for this is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." Therefore the child must be taught about God. And here the child is wonderfully equipped by nature. The child has, for example, a very vivid imagination. A child has the power of visualizing that you and I often lose as we grow older, and therefore to him God can be very, very real. To him the angels are real, the devil is real. Because God can be real to him, he can enter into a relationship with God that God also wants him to enter. Therefore he should be taught, not only that God is and that God has come to be his Saviour in the Lord Jesus Christ and that therefore in Jesus we meet God, but should be taught also to have communion with Him in prayer.

Then, too, the child has the natural capacity of being ready to trust. A child naturally trusts people. Why, you can put a child up on a high table and, if he is able to walk, ask him to walk out off the table, and he will do it. You can stand in front of him and say "come" and he will come. He will not stop to reason that there is a fall over the edge of that table. Therefore it is also easy for the child

to believe in the promises of God. He should be taught those promises that he may have them to believe in.

But when God gave the child "life in His name," He did not obliterate the natural life. God did not annihilate the flesh in that child. The baby is not a better baby after he is baptized. Sometimes superstitious people have thought that after baptism he would not cry so much. No, he still has the flesh. That part of him is growing and developing. But God's intention and purpose is that the "life in His name" shall also grow and develop and be stronger than the life in the flesh. And that is why Jesus has told us not only to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them," but also "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

And now, having been taught that God has met us in Jesus and we may meet God in Jesus, the child is also to be taught that Jesus will take care of his sins. The child must be taught that sin is sin. How does God teach us that sin is sin? Through the law. And that is the purpose of the law, to show us that we are sinners and how awful sin is. Therefore the child must meet the law. From the day of its birth the child should meet God's law in its parents.

The child should meet the will of God in the will of its parents. Blessed is that child who has parents that have a will that does not yield to the will

of the child. The child who has parents that yield to its every whim is getting a sad start in the world. Why, as soon as the baby whimpers he has to be carried and rocked, something is wrong with him because he is crying! He is but trying to exercise a little, and he is not even permitted to do that. When he is to be put to bed, mother has to sit right there and rock him and be with him until he goes to sleep. And when he gets a little older he must have the light on because he cannot be in the dark. And mother has to lie down with him because he will not go to sleep unless she is there. And so after a while the baby rules the whole house instead of mother and father ruling the baby. And you would be surprised how quickly that can happen without your even realizing what has come about.

Many earnest Christian fathers and mothers are ignorant as to how they should deal with their children. It does not hurt the baby to realize that mother and father have a will and that their will is an absolute will. I know the problems that come up in holding to that and how differently each child has to be treated. I know how you have to pray for wisdom. No one can be a Christian parent unless they have the help of Jesus, and even then they have to confess how they have failed in being what they ought to be.

The children are to meet the will of God in the

will of the parents in order that they may know what sin is, and after entering more into the conscious life they ought to be taught that sin is sin and that God has dealt with sin in Jesus and that therefore He expects that we bring our sins into the light, confess them and ask for forgiveness. Here is where we are failing in the teaching of the children. How sad it is to come to the Sunday school and ask the children, "How do you get to heaven?" and hear them answer, "By being good." How ignorant our children are of the way of "life in His name."

Once I was sitting in the parlors of a church, playing and singing some songs to a little girl about seven years old, and then I asked her, "Do you love Jesus?" She said, "Yes." There was no hesitancy there. I said, "Does Jesus love you?" "When I am good," she said. I said, "Doesn't He love you when you are bad?" A cloud went over her face and she said, "I don't know." I said, "Do you go to Sunday school?" "Yes." "Have you not been told that Jesus loves you when you are bad?" "No." She supposed that Jesus loves us only if we are good. And if you think back into your childhood, will you not have to admit that that is just what you thought Christianity was?

Now, the child should be told that Jesus is sorry and that He expects us to come to Him and

ask for forgiveness. He wants to forgive us because He loves us. He is sorry because He loves us so much and His love was so great that He died for us, even though we were bad. For while we were yet enemies He loved us.

And it is not only children who think this way. I have found that many grown people think that if they can only succeed in being good, according to some standard they have, then Jesus will love them and save them. This shows that they have not understood the way of "life in His name" at all.

So the child is to be taught that sin is sin against God—that God has provided for forgiveness and that he is to come with his sin to God and ask for and receive forgiveness for Jesus' sake.

Now, you will have to help the child with that. The child will not do so of his own accord even though he has "life in His name." Remember that He has also life in the flesh. He will not go to Jesus and ask for forgiveness unless you help him and you have to help him both by example and by precept. Not only must you tell him to go but you must go with him. You yourself must bow down before God and ask for forgiveness for your sins and help the child to ask for forgiveness for his sins. Anyone who has dealt with children will know how many times you have to help them and how definitely you have to help them. You may even have to put the words

in the child's mouth. But God has put us into this world to help the children do that. And of course you cannot treat each one exactly the same way. You will have to study the child. One is so entirely different from another. Some awaken into conscious understanding of sin and grace much earlier than others.

What children, then, are living the "life in His name"? Those who go to God with their sins when they are shown that they are sins, and when helped to go to Him, they are living the "life in His name." "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

At the Crossroads

If the child lives and is normal, he will not always be a child. He is developing more and more. He has within himself an urge to become grown-up. No child is satisfied to remain a child. Grown people sometimes think that they wish they could be children again, but I wonder, if you and I really had the choice to-day to be where we now are or to go back and be a child over again, what we would choose. There is within us an urge to go on, we do not want to go back. And so the child makes use of all his experiences to help him to go on.

The young child is especially impressionable to the stimuli of all kinds of experiences that he has here on earth. He gathers them up, he stores them away in his conscious life or in his subconscious life, for no doubt we store away many things in the subconscious life that we do not store away at first in conscious life. That, too, is a thought that ought to help us and encourage us in the training of children. They are influenced not only by what they think through and by what they remember; they are influenced by the very atmosphere they breathe, every word that is spoken to them, every act that they

see. Every person with whom they come in contact has some influence upon their lives. This ought to be a challenging thought to us whenever we are in contact with children. We ought to remember—I am influencing this child, not only by what I say and what I do, but by what I am. You see then, how much it means, too, that the children have the right environment for their lives.

The time soon comes when they are children no longer. We now think of the adolescent and teen age or period of their lives. Then we must ask the question—How do they then live the "life in His name"? Do they still live it as children live it? Is it enough that they live it as the child lives it, or is the intent and purpose of God that they are to have deeper experiences, that they are to enter more fully into the conscious experience of the "life in His name"?

Consider this passage from 1 Cor. 13. 11: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things." In the adolescent period of the natural life, there are especially two noticeable characteristics that develop. One is that of self-examination, or, as it is called, introspection; the other is that of self-determination.

Now, there has been some introspection and some self-determination even in the child, but in the

adolescent period there is a marked development of these two characteristics. The young child is busy almost entirely with the outward experiences and does not think very much into his own feelings, his own thoughts, his own emotions. He does not examine them. But when he becomes adolescent something within him awakens and he begins to think about himself in a way he never thought before. He experiences emotions that he has never experienced before. Because they are new to him they are often overwhelming and he sometimes cannot control them. He seems lost in the maze of the new feelings and emotions that rise up within him.

This sometimes makes him very self-conscious, especially if he be a boy. The girls are not quite so self-conscious; somehow or other they seem to be able to press through and put on a bold face. But the boys are so self-conscious. Their hands are too big, they don't know where to put them, and their feet are too big and their legs are too long and they are so clumsy. And their voices they cannot control. Sometimes they talk like a girl and sometimes they talk like a man in a barrel, and everybody makes fun of them. They notice if he gets a tear in his eye, then they tell him he is super-sensitive. If he is happy, then he is hilarious. And all this tends to make him very self-conscious and very introspective.

Now, that is the waking up of his natural life and

he is becoming a man. He is a clumsy man, I will admit, but he is becoming a man; he is not a boy any longer. He is in such a formative period. When those natural capacities are thus awakening, God intends that His spiritual life shall also awaken. There are now increased capacities for living the "life in His name."

It is now possible for him to understand and feel convicted of sin in a way that he never could as a child. The child understands mostly the sinfulness of outward sins. The child understands that it is sin with the mouth, with the hands, but does not think of and does not realize sin in the heart. But now when he is awakening to self-examination and introspection the young person begins to look into his own heart and begins to realize as he never did before that his heart is full of sinful desires.

There are awakening in his physical and natural life desires that are not in themselves sinful, but he discovers within himself the desire to abuse the natural gifts of his body and he has all kinds of wicked thoughts and imaginations. And that disturbs him. He is beginning to realize that he has a wicked heart. It is the intention of God that he should realize that, that he should now come to a realization that not only the outward things are sin, not only does the law demand a certain regulation of the outward life, but that the law demands that

the heart be pure and holy. Now he can understand that.

Also there is developing in this adolescent period the characteristic of self-determination. Oh, he has had quite some self-determination as a child, but now he begins to want more and more to decide things for himself. He shows this in many ways. He does not always want to take everybody else's directions for his life. He not only wants to decide many things for himself but also to keep some things to himself. After a few years he begins to think about the choice of a mate. He thinks much about that. He likes first this girl and then another girl. And he does not like to have mother or sister tell him what girl he should like. Not at all, because he wants to decide some things for himself. That is only one example, and there are many others.

It is a difficult time for the parents. Very difficult. They feel, if they have any feeling in their hearts for their children, that they are getting out of their hands. When they were little children they did what they were told, but now they decide for themselves. And I can imagine how the father heart and the mother heart yearns over them as they see them leaving the counsel and advice of the parents to decide things for themselves. It has always been so and always will be so and God intends that

this situation shall also play a part in the "life in His name."

If the child has the privilege of being trained in a Christian home the child has been depending upon the will of the parents. If father and mother say it is so and so, then it must be. Then there is no other will to be considered than the will of father and mother. "If they want me to go to church, then I go to church; if they want me to pray, I pray; they have led me to God and I go where they lead me." But now the question is—Shall I continue to do that? I have done what my parents have told me to do up to this time, but now—Do I still want to do it? And so there comes a time when he must make his own decision for or against God. Oh, how important this period in life is and how important it is to receive the right guidance and help during this transition period!

How many shipwrecks there are during this period! Here the statistics of our church tell a sad tale. We have brought up to the confirmation age thousands of young people. We confirm them. Their confirmation day is supposed to be that day of decision. They make their promise to the church and the Lord and they are gone. The statistics show us that we drop every year just as many people as we confirm. Who are all those whom we drop? They are young people whom we have con-

firmed in our churches but whom we do not succeed in leading into a conscious life union with Christ Jesus. It is a sad tale. If those figures could talk to us, they would tell us of many heart-rending experiences that probably are hidden from the world, that no one but God and one heart knows.

There is, for example, the story of those who in this awakening period heard the voice of the world calling to them. Its voice had never sounded just as it sounded now. Why, home and father and mother, they had meant the most of all, but now companions and other doings in the world mean so much. The invitation comes to go out and have a good time. But the conscience is awakened. "I feel that it may not be right to go out and have that kind of a good time, for I have been brought up in the way of the Lord."

"Oh, you will try anything once, will you not? We will just have fun. You are too young to be so religious. That is for old people, not young people. You will have plenty of time to be religious and serious when you get old."

And they go out and have fun and discover it really is fun, too. They become more and more daring. And as they are led out into the world, they taste deeper and deeper of what the world offers, and the more they drink, the more intoxicated they become with the pleasures of the world. The con-

science may at first object seriously against it and there may be little struggles alone with God. But conscience can be told to keep still and be overcome. So these young people are launched fully on the stream of worldliness which leads them to destruction.

Then there are others who have the privilege of going to school and receiving higher learning, and they see and hear examples of those who are far on the road of unbelief. The problems of: Where did I come from? What am I and where am I going? How did this world come about? Who is God? Is there a Saviour? All these become problems to these young people, and then they have their own conscience speaking louder than ever before. How shall I get right with God? If I should die, would I go to heaven? Most of these young people can only answer, "I hope so, I have tried to be good. I hope I will get to heaven if I should die."

But they are not satisfied with that and as they are led out into life, temptations arise—they yield to them, they sin and then conscience is stricken more and more. How shall I get away from this pain in my heart? Someone tells them it is only foolishness. There is no God and if there is you cannot really know. Soon they are drifting down into the stream and the whirlpools of unbelief.

Now, in our Lutheran church we think there are

not many people who become infidels. I want to tell you there are. There are many of our young people who choose to deny all they have learned in childhood and choose to put God out of their lives so that they can determine everything for themselves without reference to the will of God. Back of all the unbelief of to-day is an evil conscience.

And then there are those young people who make such fine decisions when they have come to this period of awakening in their lives. They are going to be good. Their conscience is tender, it does not permit them to do outwardly what they see other young people doing and therefore they decide to be good. They remain at home in obedience to their parents. At least they try to be obedient more or less. They go to church regularly and take part in all the activities of the church. They succeed in arranging their outward life so that it will appear to be a good life and they have the approval of their elders and are told both at home and in church that they are good young people.

But down in the bottommost of their hearts they know it is not so. Neither can they say that they "know Him whom they have believed," and "I know I am saved." The only answer they can give is "I hope so." Some even say, "I am trying to be." It shows that they do not have an experimental knowledge of the way of salvation.

This is the experience of so many of our young people. They remain in church but they show nothing of a personal experience in Christ and when they hear people speak of being convicted of sin and havin faith and assurance they wonder: What really is that anyway? Some of them comfort themselves with the thought that it is something Reformed. That is, something that happens to people in the Baptist Church or in the Methodist Church, or at revival meetings. But in the Lutheran Church they think we do not need to have that happen to us because we are saved another way.

Unless they are led by the Spirit of God into the experience of conviction of sin and faith and trust in Christ Jesus in a personal way, when they become older they become enemies to Christ and to a Christian experience. They do not want to hear of such a thing as repentance and faith. They comfort themselves with the thought that we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. The worst part of it is that they do not know that fear and trembling, they are perfectly comfortable in working out their own salvation.

But then there are some who really are truly awakened, but because they do not receive the right kind of spiritual guidance when in this period of awakening, become despairing, heavy-hearted, downcast, sometimes are marked for life spiritually and

mentally by their attitude of downheartedness, wondering whether or not they really can be saved. Sometimes there are terrible experiences for such young people who are earnest, serious minded, but not clearly and definitely directed to the free grace that is in Christ Jesus. They have been laboring terribly under the law and they have a hard time, even when they have seen Christ, to be set free from the law and see that in Him they have liberty from the law. They need special care and special help and special patience and sympathy.

But then, thank God, there are also those who experience consciously now in a way they never have before, repentance and faith. Those who see themselves in the light of the Word of God and see the Lord Jesus as their own Saviour and become conscious children of God. Nay, more than children, they become grown men and women in Christ. And that is God's plan and purpose for all His children, that they should then be able to say that "when I was a child I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things."

The Spiritual Awakening of the God-Fearing Child

We have traced briefly and rapidly the natural awakening of a child and have seen that God's intention and purpose is that along with the natural awakening and developing of the conscious life, there shall also be an awakening of the spiritual life. For God's purpose is not that the child is to remain a babe in Christ but that the child is to grow up and become a man or woman in Christ.

Now the awakening process began in early childhood. God wanted to teach the child as well as having us teach the child. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught of God." Of course, He wanted to use us as instruments to teach the mind and heart of the child but there is another teaching that only God can teach. It is only the Holy Spirit who can enter into the innermost and teach the inner man. The Bible speaks of such a thing as "the eyes of our heart." The Bible says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." Spiritual hearing and spiritual vision can only be brought about by God Himself.

Now, in the child there is not the capacity to understand spiritual things that there is in the grown person, and we pointed out in our last study that the child can only be convicted of outward sins and cannot experience deeply the inner conviction of sin. Neither can the child deeply experience the Saviour. Not having a deep need of the grace of God in Christ, he cannot have a deep appreciation of the grace of God in Christ. He can have sufficient for his childhood needs, but what is sufficient for his childhood needs is not sufficient for his manhood experiences.

Now we suppose that a child has been given religious instruction, has yielded to that instruction, learned to confess sin, tell it to Jesus, believe in forgiveness. He comes to the period of his life when he begins to look into his inner self. Then God also wants him to realize that he has a sinful nature. Now if he listens to the Word of God, he hears, as I can so well remember that I heard in the days of my youth, that it is necessary not only not to do the wicked things, but also to have a hatred for sin. I looked into my heart and I discovered that in reality I did not hate sin. There were many sins that I actually enjoyed. That was a terrible discovery.

Also I discovered that there were many sins that I did not commit outwardly, not because I hated

them, but because I was afraid to commit them. I feared the consequences. I was afraid I might get into trouble. I also was afraid that it would displease my parents. I was also afraid of hell. So I kept myself from committing outward sins, not because I hated them, but because I was afraid to commit them. I can remember also, how I secretly envied young people who could go out into sin and not seem to be bothered by it. Why could not I do that? No, I could not do that because I was afraid.

Well can I remember, too, that I heard in church that we should love God with all our heart and soul, and that our love of God would be manifest in interest and love for the things of God. But, having begun to introspect, and knowing that it was useless to try to deceive myself, even though I succeeded in deceiving others, I knew that I did not love God like that. I went to church regularly, took pride in going to church. I was especially proud over the fact that I could go to church and not miss a Sunday, and even went twice on Sunday. I particularly swelled with pride when that was noticed by people and I was called a good boy. But I could not say to myself that I loved it. No, there really was no place that was quite so tedious as a church and no men who were quite so boresome to listen to as ministers.

But afterwards the thought would come, "What is wrong with my heart anyway? Why do I not love

those things? Am I not a child of God after all? I have always thought that I was a child of God. I have been told that I am a child of God. And yet, here I am, I cannot say that I really love God and the things of God, but I am going to try."

And so the young man tries. Suppose now that he is honest and really sincere. Then he is full of good intentions. He will go to church. He will sing in the choir. He will be faithful in the Sunday school. He will prove that he really loves God.

But as he goes on, if he is honest, he realizes that in his heart he loves sin and is not truly interested in God. Why, even in church there are other things which interest him more than God. His thoughts fly off in all kinds of directions. With what interest he thinks, for example, of the girl sitting over there whom he is going to take home from church. "Just great that she came to-night! Say, I wish this service would soon be over so we could get started." In that he is vitally interested, but not in the service.

And he reads his Bible at home because his mother says, "You don't often read the Bible. Don't you think you ought to read the Bible?" And so he reads. "What a dry Book! Can it be that people who study and read it are truly interested in it or do they make believe they are interested? I am not interested. But a story of adventure! In that I can be interested. And a romance! I can

live in that with my heart and soul, but how can I ever get interested in the Bible that is so dry?"

And then as he sets out, if he is honest, to try to keep the commandments of God (he is going to *try* to keep them anyway) he finds that the lust to sin is awakened more and more. Why, there is rising in him that which he had not seen before. Now, it is God's intention and purpose that the young shall be awakened to a realization of how sinful their evil nature is. When they were baptized as infants the evil nature was not annihilated. As children they could not enter into experiences of their evil nature, but now that they are becoming men and women, it is God's intention and purpose that they shall realize that in themselves they have a nature which is enmity towards God. Then they will realize their need of a Saviour.

Friends, that is why Jesus is not precious to many of our young people. Because they have not been deeply convicted of sin. They have not seen that they are sinners who need a Saviour. "Of course, murderers and adulterers, thieves and robbers, they need to be converted and need a Saviour, but we good young people who go to church, what more can you ask of us? What is it after all that these ministers want of us? What more can they ask than what we are giving?" God wants a realization of sin, of the sinfulness of your very nature.

"They shall all be taught of God." God is the only one that can teach them. "Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto Me." But how important that the young person receive the right guidance. Some are told, "Why, you have nothing to be concerned about. You have always been a good person. You are all right. Those troubles you have, forget about them. Continue to read and pray and go to church and you will find that such things will take care of themselves. We all have our ups and downs in the spiritual life."

I say, if this young person is told something like that he will either become indifferent to his own condition or else he will become self-satisfied. No, that is not the guidance that he needs. He needs to be shown that he has a sinful nature and that sin is sin, and that unless God is in his life to fill him with the fulness of His grace, the evil nature that he has in him will crush out the life that God gave him in baptism.

He must be shown that his sins must come to the light, not only the sins he has committed, but the great sins of omission and the sinfulness of his sinful nature. He must realize that in the Word of God he has a picture of his wicked heart and that this picture is true and he now knows it is true. He not only knows this in his head but from the experiences he has gone through. When Jesus describes the

heart as being the source of wickedness of all kinds, of licentiousness, adultery, murder, theft and everything like that, he knows that is true about his own heart. And the worst of it is that he has become so indifferent about it that he does not feel sorry over it. He admits it is true and still he feels no sorrow over it. He must realize the sin of that, too.

And when he has become thus thoroughly helpless, has come to the point where he sees that it is not a matter of trying to be good any more, or even trying to be saved, or even trying to believe, as I hear so many young people say, but simply in desperation seeing what he is himself, he casts himself upon Jesus as the only hope and the only way out. "Now I see that unless Jesus helps me I must go to hell, being what I am. Therefore, Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner."

And so the young person has been spiritually awakened and is ready to start out in a new relationship to Jesus. Not new in nature from the relationship that he had as a child, but new in experience. New especially in his own personal realization of his desperate need of Jesus.

Oh, blessed are those young people who have had that awakening! It takes a long time. God started to awaken us when we were just babes, when we began to have consciousness. Those who have known God from childhood do not necessarily have

to point to some day in their life and be able to say, "On that day I was awakened." No, when they look back on their life, they can see that God has been awakening them all along, each one, however, being awakened according to his own nature and his own need. For some the awakening has to come very gradually, like the dawning of a new day. Some have to have a tremendous crash in order to be awakened, and they get it. But at some time and in some way, all those who hear the Word of God, (in greater or lesser degree in accordance with how they respond to that Word) come to this realization: "There is something lacking in me, I am not in the relation to God that I ought to be." This is an awakening.

Backsliders

"I am the true Vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it that it may bear more fruit." John 15. 1.

It was in baptism that we were grafted into the Vine, becoming branches of that Vine. By the grace of God we then began to share the life that is in Christ. God did the grafting. It was a miraculous work. It was regeneration. It was God's saving work upon us. In our infant life there were no hindrances that made it impossible for God to share that life with us. We did not resist Him who came to us in the fullness of power and the Holy Spirit took of the life of Christ and gave it to us.

It is the intent and purpose of God that this life should be brought to a conscious experience. Not all come to the adult experience in Christ that God has intended. The question arises here, "Is it possible for those who have been baptized and thus been born again, to fall away and be lost?"

In this connection we have to meet the assertion that some make, "Once saved, always saved." They

say it is very evident that baptism does not save. They say, "You see, do you not, that many baptized people do not remain saved. Evidently they were not saved or they would have remained saved." Of course, the Bible does not say, "Once saved, always saved."

And we have an answer for such, a statement that never can be gainsaid because people who hold that view usually also hold the view that children do not need to be baptized because they have never deliberately rejected the grace that is in Christ Jesus. They, then, hold that all infants are saved. So I ask them this, "Are infants who are not baptized saved?" "Yes," they say, "they are saved." But, you say, "Once saved, always saved." "Yes." Well, then, evidently all infants are always saved, are they not? And all human beings must always be saved? Why, then, do we need to preach repentance and faith when everybody is saved because they were saved as infants, and "once saved, always saved"? They must all now be saved! Which, of course, is foolish and contrary to the teaching of the Word of God. No, the Word of God plainly teaches that it is possible for men to choose to turn away from God and become backsliders.

Now then, can a child become a backslider? Not while it is a very young child. Not as long as it is not psychologically possible to make a choice for or

against the Lord. But suppose the child develops in the natural life to a point where he can make decisions for himself, and is led by adults to know God and to understand what sin is. If he comes to the point where he, despite the guidance and direction of others, refuses to confess his known sins but deliberately chooses to live in them and not confess them to God, and resists the guidance that tries to lead him to confession, that child has fallen from baptismal grace.

I do not know that this happens very often in young children. I do not think it does. I think there are very, very few of the children who are given a Christian training, who thus deliberately choose to live in sin. I do not say it is impossible for a young child, say ten, eleven or twelve years old, to make such a choice, but it is seldom done.

The grave danger is in the transition period of which we have been speaking, when the child who still remains in baptismal grace has been awakened. We have already traced this experience up to the time of his awakening. His awakening consisted in this, that he saw himself as a lost sinner. He had the experience in which he had to say, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."

Now the grace received in baptism seeks to work in this awakened young person so that he will make a choice, and the choice is to be repentance and faith.

That is what God wants to work in his heart. He may choose not to repent and believe and I am afraid that many do choose not to repent and believe. Many choose deliberately, and even though they may never give it very serious thought, it yet is a deliberate choice to live in their sins, which they now see are sins.

Others choose to live in their own piety. They are not ready to choose repentance, to admit before God that they are lost, condemned sinners. They still have an outward form of Christian piety in which they have been living and even though they have come to the realization that in themselves there dwelleth no good thing, yet they have this formal piety upon which they have been relying. And they cling to those forms, their Bible reading, their praying, their going to church and rely on them. They do not want to admit of the lost condition of their own self-life. They have fallen from grace.

Certainly it is a sign of having fallen from grace when people rely upon their own piety. They say, "Why, I have a fine Christian family, and back of me I have all kinds of men and women who have lived fine Christian lives and have served the Lord. I have been born in a Christian home and lived in a Christian atmosphere. I have directed my life in those channels and I am to-day living according to

the teaching and instruction of Christian parents. What more do you want?"

Yes, the Spirit of God wants repentance and faith and they do not want to give it. They have fallen from grace.

Now, what is the result of such backsliding? Why, the Word of God says that they are dead. Jesus says, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away." Now the fruit that God is looking for in these young branches is repentance and faith. When they do not bear that fruit of repentance and faith, then God takes that branch away.

He also says, "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." In another portion of Scripture—"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

They are dead. What do they need? They need to be resurrected from the dead. "Awake, thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life." (Eph. 5. 14.) And you remember that is spoken to backsliders and not to those who never have known Christ. Note carefully that it does not say there that they are to be born again. But, "Awake, thou that sleepest and arise from the dead." They were born once, but now they are dead. "This my son was dead," was spoken of the prodigal

son, but it was also said, "and is alive again." What God sees they need and what He wants to bring about in backsliders is that they be raised again from the dead.

In order to be raised again from the dead it is not necessary that they be rebaptized. That question often arises amongst young people who feel that they have been dead in trespasses and sins and have left the Lord. When they come back again to the Lord, do they have to be baptized again? Some have even said to me, "I almost wish I could be baptized again so I really could be sure that I have received the life again." And there are those who think they ought to be baptized again.

No, that is not necessary. Why? Even though one has through his sin become dead and had to be severed from the Vine, God has not changed in His relationship to the covenant made in baptism. On account of baptismal grace the life from Christ is still offered to them as to all mankind. Because of baptismal grace, the Holy Spirit, I think, especially works upon the hearts of backsliders to call them back to God. He calls them, He seeks them, He prods in their conscience to bring them back and when they come in repentance and faith, there is still poured out to them, as there always has been from God's side, the life that is in Christ.

Dr. Hallesby uses a striking illustration of this.

He says that when our houses are wired for electricity and everything is correct in the wiring, then the power coming from the power house through the wiring and the connections lights and heats and operates machinery in the home. It may happen, however, that a connection to the house is broken and then the power cannot get into the house. The power is still there, the wiring is still there, but the connection is broken. Now, in order to get power into the house again it is not necessary that we build a new power station, nor is it necessary even that we get a new line to the house, nor to rewire the house. All that is necessary is that the connection be restored.

And so, too, in the case of those who have been backsliding and have left the Lord. It is not necessary that God lay a new wire into their hearts. God has already done that once in baptism, but it is necessary that the connection be restored and that is done in repentance and faith.

But now, you may ask, what really is the difference between the experience of the one who has never fallen from grace and of those who have fallen from grace?

If there is any difference, the difference is in degree only. As far as the inner thought and feeling of the person is concerned, there perhaps is very little difference.

For the one who has never fallen from baptismal grace must in his adult life come to a realization of the helplessness of self. He must see that in himself, in his evil nature, which was not annihilated in baptism, there lie hindrances to the grace of God. He has to recognize those hindrances. He has to see that those are the things that are keeping the grace of God from fulfilling God's intent and purpose in his life and that therefore he must repent. Not only must he confess the sins that he commits, but he must confess the sinfulness of his sinful nature, and make his choice before God, not relying upon this, "I was baptized, therefore I am a child of God. I have lived a good life as a child and a young person and therefore I must be a child of God." But, rather, "I am a sinner, but Jesus has died for sinners and I ask that I might be received simply because Jesus has borne my sins in His body on the tree."

There are degrees in which the experience of the God-fearing child and the backslider differ. The one who has chosen to live in sin has also entered into the bondage of sin. He has become enslaved in sinful habits and vice, and such a person always has a hard struggle with sin. That struggle the protected young person, who has been kept from vice and sin, knows nothing of. Those who have never been bond-slaves to such sinful habits as drink, for

example, nor have deliberately continued living in other forms of vice, they do not know what a terrible struggle it may be to break with one of those sins.

But, on the other hand, the young person who has led the protected life and been kept from living in vice and sins, has a much harder time to recognize the sinfulness of self. For the one who has lived in vice, it is not hard to recognize that he is a lost sinner and that he has not only committed sins outwardly, but that his mind and heart are full of corruption and vice and evil. But for the one who has been living a protected life and been kept from the outward vices, it is hard to see that "in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."

This is where the hard struggle comes. "Do I have to admit before God that I am just as black and just as evil and filthy as the murderer, adulterer, the thief and those who live in open vice? Do I, who have always been a good boy or girl, who have been told by my friends and by my pastor and everybody else that I am good, do I have to admit that I am in myself just as lost as those who live in the slums and in the vice and dirt of the world?"

Yes, you do. And oh, that our young people could receive the guidance from the Word of God that would help them to make that choice! To choose to admit that in ourselves we are absolutely

bankrupt. We must be saved by grace, which we recognize as unmerited, because we see how wicked our sinful nature is. Thus will we have a realization of our need of Jesus, and because we need Him so much He will become very precious to us.

Pleading Guilty

The miracle recorded in the fifth chapter of the Gospel by John constitutes an acted-out parable of awakening, repentance and faith. That such is the meaning of the miracle that Jesus performed is clear from His own statement, when He says,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."

When Jesus came to the pool of Bethesda, He looked upon all the sickness and the suffering that was there. There lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered. That is mankind: sick in sin, dead in trespasses and sins. And Jesus goes to the one who perhaps is in the worst condition, who has been sick for thirty-eight years, who is helpless and hopeless. He directs His question, His calling, awakening question, to him, "Wouldest thou be made whole?" By this question He would arouse within the man a realization of his condition, a realization of his helplessness and also awaken in him a hope of salvation.

We have seen that it is the Word of God that

awakens man. And in the awakening that comes to those who listen to God's Word, there is an enlightening process going on. God enlightens their understanding so that they begin to realize that they have a responsibility before God and that they are guilty. He also awakens their feelings, they begin to be afraid. Indeed it may be the consequences of their sin that they fear. They are afraid of God. They struggle with sin only to fail again and again and then to fall desperately helpless in the grip of sin. But their will is also awakened because, if they have listened to God they will also want to know, "How can I be saved?" "What shall I do to be saved?"

In this stage of the experience, then, we are convicted of our sin. We realize our guilt, we want peace, but usually the awakened sinner wants peace with himself and not with God. He wants peace in his inner life. "The peace which passeth all understanding" is not his main desire, but the peace that he wants in his own heart, that is the main thing. He wants to be saved in order that he might feel more comfortable than he now feels. He wants to be saved in order that he might be delivered from his fears, from his struggles and from the feeling of judgment resting on him. He does not want to be saved in order to give joy in heaven, in order to glorify God and honor Him, he does not think about

that. He thinks only about himself, because we are by nature so self-centered.

Now God wants to lead such an awakened person to repentance and faith. How He does that is illustrated by what He did with that sick man. "Wouldest thou be made whole?" What happens in the sick man then? His answer reveals it. "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but when I am coming, another steppeth down before me." It is as though he would say: "I am helpless. I have been trying to get over to that pool. There is help in that pool. If I only could get there I would no doubt be well, but I have tried and tried and I have failed. Also, there is no one to help me to get over there. Nobody cares." Therefore, self is dead. "If I am going to be helped, someone else has to help me." He is really coming close to the experience of repentance. God is offering him repentance.

What, then, really is repentance? The Bible uses a word which means "a change of mind." By that change of mind is not meant the new mind and heart that is given us in regeneration, in which we share the mind and heart of God when we have the "life in His name." It is rather a new way of looking at sin and self and our relation to God, which is given us by God, for God *gives* repentance and He *commands us to repent.* That is, He offers to us the pos-

sibility of repenting and then He tells us to repent. He works in us both to will and to do.

This is a change of mind, a change of mind towards God. The *unawakened sinner* pays no attention to God. It makes no difference to him what God thinks, he does as he pleases.

The *awakened sinner* is afraid of God. He fears God on account of his sins.

But the *repentant sinner* says, "How shall I come to God? I must find God. My heart, my soul yearneth for God. Show me how I can get right with God." So the mind has been changed. The whole attitude towards God has been changed.

There is also a change of mind with respect to sin. The *unawakened sinner* sins and enjoys his sins.

The *awakened sinner* sins and fears desperately the consequences of his sins and struggles with them.

The *repentant sinner* admits that he loves his sins but is willing to be delivered from them. Now, it is very necessary that we see that, because there are many who think that there is no repentance until we can honestly say, "Now I hate my sins. Now I am *so sorry* for my sins that I really hate them. And now I can come to God and *tell* Him that I hate my sins." Why, no. No sinner can do that until he has experienced fully what God wants to give him in the "life in His name."

The repentant sinner comes to God and says, "I

have to admit that I really enjoy my sins. I have such a wicked nature that I have taken pleasure in sin; if not in the coarse sins of vice, yet in the other sins that seem to be more refined, in my pride, my selfishness, and so on. And even now I realize that in myself I love those sins but I want to be delivered from them. I am willing now to be set free, cost what it may."

We ought to realize that it costs something to be set free from sin. Perhaps we should take just one example. If my sin has been the sin of selfishness. If that has been the outstanding sin of my life, I have to admit before God that my whole life is centered in myself. I have planned for myself, I have lived for self and I have tried to get everyone to live for me. But now I am to be delivered from my sin. That will cost me something. Then I will not be permitted to think about myself altogether hereafter. God will so change my inner life that I will have to think about others and yield to others. Then I am not going to have things just quite so comfortable for self and for my fleshly nature as I have been having when insisting on everything for self.

Then too, God works in us a change of mind with respect to ourselves. The *unawakened sinner* is his own lord and god. He does not always really think into that. I have heard people say, however, that "I am my own god."

The *awakened sinner* still has some confidence in self. He makes good resolutions. "I am going to be good now. I am going to prepare myself and come to God. I am going to try to be what He wants me to be. I am going to get over to the pool by some way or other. I am going to crawl over there and get in so that I may be made well." Still has some confidence in self, you see. He may say, "Well, I am going to repent, anyway, so that I can come with my repentance to God." What does he mean by repentance? Usually he means, "I am going to be sorry for my sin. I am going to show God my sorrow." And he tries to be sorry. He even tries to work up feelings of sorrow within himself. And when that does not succeed so very well, then he thinks that he surely must be much more lost than other people are. And *that* he needs to see.

Sometimes, however, he may be in church and hearing a stirring appeal, feel quite moved and touched, even to the extent of being able to weep, deeply convicted, and then he has a little more comfort for old self. "I am not thoroughly and completely dead, anyway, because to-day the minister made me weep in church." No, he has to die more than that. After a while he cannot even feel sorry. If he hears the same pastor preach many times, the newness wears off and it does not stir him the way it did the first time he heard that person.

No, if he is to be saved he must come to the realization that, as far as he himself is concerned, he is stuck, absolutely mired in his sin and that self is helpless. "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." Neither himself nor anyone else. "While I am coming, another steppeth down before me." Only hindrances, everything gets in the way, and he is simply helpless.

Now he has come to the point in this change of mind where he has to make a choice. And there is where the sinner's part of repentance comes in. What will he choose to do now? If he really listens to the Word of God now, then the *truly repentant sinner* will make this choice—he will go to God and confess all his sins.

But, someone says right away, he has to feel sorry for them, does he not, before he will be forgiven? No, the Bible does not say so. The Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." How can that be? Why, just because God is faithful and just, and being faithful and just, He cannot demand payment for sin a second time.

Jesus Christ has paid for all sin once, and therefore when I come and confess my sin, God cannot demand any second payment. He is faithful and just, and He must accept as payment for my sins the work of His Son, Jesus Christ. He is also faith-

ful and just to Jesus, His Son, to whom He has promised that all sinners who come in His name will be forgiven. He cannot go back on the promise to His Son.

Then, too, the truly awakened and repentant sinner will be willing to ask God to deliver him from all sins, no matter what it costs. He will also be willing to admit that he is in the bondage of sin and that God's judgment upon him is true and righteous. He will be willing to say to his God, "I know I ought to go to hell, but I want to be delivered from hell. It is just and right for Thee to judge me and condemn me, because I have broken Thy law and sinned against Thee, but for Thy mercy's sake, save me and deliver me."

He will also be willing to admit that he is not sorry over sin as he ought to be. "Lord, here I am admitting all this sin and admitting my own helplessness and I cannot even say that I am sorry. I admit that my heart is as black as the Bible paints it and I cannot say that I feel any deep sorrow over it. So far have I fallen in sin."

And then he is willing to turn to Christ and ask Him to supply all that he needs. And I think that in the words of this sick man at Bethesda you can also see that he really is turning to Christ when he says, "I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." Does there not lie back of

that a hint that he is also thinking,—"Perhaps this man will help me"? And that is what Jesus wants us to realize. He is the man who has died for us and borne our sins in His body on the tree, and therefore we may turn to Him in our desperate condition and ask Him to do that which is impossible for us to do.

Asking Mercy

"Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take up thy bed and walk."

Truly those are remarkable words, especially when we consider that they were spoken to a man who for thirty-eight years had not even been able to crawl or drag himself over to the pool of healing waters. That man has just said to Jesus, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool, but when I am coming, another steppeth down before me." He has thus confessed his helplessness and his hopelessness, in which confession he has been *an example of repentance.* It is to such a confessing penitent that Jesus says, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." Note what happens. Straightway the man was made whole and took up his bed and walked. *That is faith.*

Faith has been analyzed as consisting of knowledge, assent and trust. The Bible does not thus analyze faith in just so many words, but that analysis of faith is clearly suggested in the Bible. The Gospel by John is particularly the Gospel that sets forth studies in faith and unbelief. Almost anywhere in this Gospel, open it where you will, you

can pick out sentences that tell you about faith or unbelief.

So, for example, in the sixth chapter we read these words, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Everyone that hath heard from the Father and hath learned, cometh unto Me." There you have plainly the three elements of faith suggested. First, "everyone that hath heard from the Father," which suggests knowledge; "and hath learned," which suggests assent; "cometh unto Me," which suggests trust.

So also in that well known quotation, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." "I am the Way," as such He must be known, for a way, to be of any value, must be known. "I am the Truth," and the truth, being truth, must be assented to. "I am the Life," and the life is to be trusted.

We received knowledge of Jesus early in our lives. You may say, "Why, if faith consists of knowledge, then I have had faith a long time, for I have known about Jesus ever since I was a little child." Yes, and that childhood knowledge of Jesus was an element of your childhood faith in Jesus. But when we grow up and have the experience of awakening that we have been describing, we discover that this knowledge that we had of Jesus as a child also goes through a change. We realize that now we have a very special need and that the knowledge that we

had of Jesus as a child appears now to be the exact supply of our need.

You may know some things that you do not have any real need of and therefore your knowledge of them remains a sort of dead knowledge. To take an example: I may have a slight knowledge of astronomy, intensely interesting knowledge. I think of it once in a while, not very often. But I can imagine that if I were cast adrift in a boat on the sea, my little knowledge of astronomy and navigation would have an entirely different meaning to me than while I was safely walking around on land. The situation that I was in presented a need and I discovered that what I knew suggested the supply for that need.

Now, as long as I do not realize my desperate need of Jesus, then my knowledge of Jesus does not mean so much to me. But when, by the grace of God, I am awakened to a realization of my own desperate need, then it is wonderful to see that what I learned even as a child about Jesus is just exactly what such a helpless, hopeless sinner needs.

The same is true when we think of assent. You say, "I assented to the truths, the facts about Jesus when I was a child. I have never doubted them. I have always accepted what I have been told about Jesus." And as a child you did assent and you have also been assenting ever since.

But is it not a fact that until we have experienced our desperate need, that assent is also a very general one? Yes, we are all sinners. We all need a Saviour. God sent Jesus to be the Saviour of the world. I, too, admit that with others I am a sinner and I need that Saviour and God sent Him for me. And yet, that may be a very impersonal assent.

When I have been awakened to a realization of how lost I am in my own self, and self has been killed and lies helpless before Jesus, then assent means something very personal. Then it means that the Son of God loved *me* and gave Himself up for *me*. He had me in mind. He thought of me. He prayed for me. He labored for me. He bore my sins in His body on the tree. He paid for me. He has prepared the way to the Father for me. He is at the right hand of the Father now to make intercession for me, and there is nothing that I need so much, and that I now realize I need, as to have a mediator at the throne of God. You see, then, assent is something very intimate, something very personal and something very real.

So, too, when it comes to trust. We trusted Jesus as children. It was a childhood trust and it was sufficient for our childish needs. But it is not sufficient for our manhood and our womanhood needs because we now can experience and realize, as we could not as children, what our need really is. So

also we have need of a deeper trust in Him. Since we have become adults, our will is stronger than it was as children. We determine things more for ourselves and therefore our trust in Him also must be manifested in a more definite, direct, personal way than it was as children.

I have mentioned the will, for, after all, trust is an act of your will. To trust Jesus is to yield your will to Him. Now that I have become a man I can understand that better than when I was a child. Now I can understand that if I really am to trust Him, it means that I am to *intrust myself to Him.* And that trust means surrender of will and mind and heart and all that I am into His hands and that I thus intrust the eternal destiny of my soul to Him. This reveals that at the very innermost of faith you have an act of your will. And that is the reason, too, why in the Bible faith is even called obedience. Obedience to the gospel. Paul uses that expression many times in speaking of faith. And in the Gospel by John we read, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, he that *obeyeth not* the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on Him." There the opposite of faith is called disobedience.

Now it is God who gives faith. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." God offers in His Son grace to believe. When God reveals Jesus to us, He also

draws us to Jesus. If we do not believe in Jesus it is because we resist God's drawing to Jesus. It is true that the gospel is an invitation to come to Jesus to be saved, but an invitation from the Lord of lords and King of kings is also a command, and therefore if I do not come to Jesus and rest in Him, I am disobeying God. In fact, I am rejecting what God is offering in His Son, the grace to believe. And so you see how terribly sinful unbelief is, because it is not only a refusal to accept the salvation that God provided in Christ, but it is also a rejection of the grace to believe, which God through the Word is offering to us now.

And so, as the Holy Spirit pictures Jesus to us, enlightening our knowledge of Him so that it becomes a living knowledge, touching us in our innermost being so that our assent to the facts becomes a personal assent, appealing to our will, then what is the response of faith? It is that I then go to Jesus and tell Him, "I do hereby surrender my sin-sick soul into Thy hands. I cannot repent, I cannot feel sorry, I cannot trust in Thee and love Thee and serve Thee as I should. But if Thou art willing to take such a creature as I am and do anything with me, save me from sin and self, then take me

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee."

That is faith. But then someone says, "Surely there must be more to faith than that. Do I not have to have some feeling of exaltation? Must I not be able to say that now I feel that I love Jesus and can really confess to the world that I love Him? Now I know that I have the testimony of His Spirit in my heart through this peace, this exaltation that is within me. Must I not be able to say that I experience faith in Him before I come to Him? How do I dare to come to Jesus before I have faith in Him and know that I have faith?"

Which reveals an entire misunderstanding of faith. For your very coming to Jesus is the faith. Your instrusting of your sin-sick, helpless, hopeless soul into His hands, that is faith.

Illustrations are sometimes helpful. Think of what it means to trust a doctor. You go to him and tell him that you are not feeling well. Even that shows that you have some confidence in him or you would not have gone to him. Still, you may not have any feeling of great affection for him. You are not particularly rejoicing and happy that you have to go to the doctor. In fact, you are glad as long as you can stay away from his office, but when the need came you were willing to go there.

He tells you that he will have to see what is the matter, and he gives you a thorough examination. You know how he listens to your heart and your

breathing and takes your temperature, feels your pulse, prods you here and there.

Sometimes he finds a sore spot, you wince when he touches that, "Oh, is there something hurting you there?" "Yes, doctor." Which causes him to prod that spot more than ever in order that he might ascertain what really is the trouble there. "Well," he tells you, "I will have to observe you a little, we cannot decide to-day. I will look over my findings, develop these pictures I have taken of you and you come back to-morrow and we will be better able to say what really is the matter."

And so, when to-morrow comes, he takes you into his room and asks you to sit down. He seems to have such a solemn look, you wonder what really is the matter. He tells you, "I want to tell you right from the start that this is something very serious. I have discovered that you have a condition that can be helped in no way except by the radical method of operation, and my advice is that you go to the hospital to-night and be operated on the first thing in the morning, for any delay may mean your death.."

Now, how will you show whether or not you have faith in him? Will it appear by a wonderful feeling of exaltation so that you will jump up and say, "Oh, how I love you, doctor! Oh, how happy you have made me! What a wonderful peace you have now

put in my heart!" I do not think so. I think you will show whether or not you have faith in him by what you do after he has said that. If you say, "All right, doctor, I will have to trust you and leave it to you to do what you think best," that shows that you have faith in him.

And then that will have to be carried out to the last detail. You will have to follow all his directions even when he tells you to lie down on the table in that white, white room where everything shines in whiteness. You will have to lie there without objection when the nurse puts the mask on your face and even robs you of your consciousness so that you are to be perfectly helpless and not do anything to help the doctor, because now you have intrusted your body to him. And he does what he pleases with your body after he has you unconscious on his table. With the result that you wake up after a while with wonderful feelings of peace and joy and exaltation? Nay, feeling worse than you ever felt before.

And when the doctor comes in and looks at you, he encourages you, "You are doing fine. Everything is all right." Doing fine! Why, you certainly do not feel as though you were doing fine, and yet you feel like taking his word for it. It encourages you that he says so. You think, "Well, if he thinks that I am doing fine, maybe I am all right after all. He

says he has taken away that which has made me sick and I am going to be well. He ought to know." Which also shows that you are trusting him.

But you see, the real act of faith in the surgeon lay in the yielding of your will to his so that you permitted him to decide everything for you. That showed that you had confidence and trust in him.

And that is exactly the way you and I show whether or not we have confidence and trust and faith in the Physician of our souls. And if only we are sick enough, so desperately sick that we realize that it is a matter of life and death, we will also be glad to intrust our souls into the hands of the Physician who so loved us that He laid down His life for us, so that, taking it again, rising from the dead, ascending into heaven, to sit down on the right hand of God the Father, He might also share with us "life in His name."

Acquittal

Jesus has told us that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents. This tells us that when a sinner repents, something must happen in heaven in the presence of the angels of God. And the Bible tells us that a judgment scene takes place in heaven, that a wonderful thing is transacted there at the throne of God. It would do us so much good if we could always bear that in mind. If we could really clearly see what God does for the repentant sinner, it would fill us with assurance and with joy.

In the fifth chapter of the Gospel by John our Lord says,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."

The repentant sinner has judged himself. He has been judged by the law and by his own conscience and, realizing that he really is bankrupt, he has gone to God and pleaded, not any merits, not any righteousness of his own, but has pleaded for mercy. He has said at the throne of God, "I am guilty, I

deserve to be condemned, whatever awful judgment might be pronounced upon me is what I am worthy of, what I deserve, but now I cast myself upon the mercy of the Judge."

Then the Word of God tells us that God has provided a way by which such a guilty sinner, repentant, confessing his sin, can be acquitted so that he shall not come into judgment, but may pass out of death—out from the sentence of death, which he admits he is worthy of—into life. The accused, guilty sinner is set free.

That is why we read in the eighth chapter of John's Gospel, "Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed Him, If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth,"—note now—"and the truth shall make you free." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin. And the bondservant abideth not in the house forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

"If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Free from what? First of all, free from the guilt of sin. When our Lord Jesus Christ bore our sins in His body on the tree, He provided a way by which it is possible for our heavenly Father to forgive our sins and that is what takes place in heaven when the penitent sinner comes and

pleads for mercy in Christ's name. Then God says, "In view of what my Son has done and in view of that you are asking for mercy for His sake, I do now hereby forgive you all your sins. And not only do I forgive them but I will remember them no more." When God remembers our sins no more it means that the sins, as far as God is concerned, absolutely exist no more.

"Whom the Son makes free, is free indeed." It also means that we are freed from the stain of our sin. Even though we may be assured that God has forgiven us our sin, our deceitful heart and Satan whispering in our heart, often cause us to think, "Oh, I still have upon me the marks of my sin. How do I dare to face the holy, righteous God even if He does say my sins are forgiven, when I know that in myself I am such an unholy creature, so that I have to confess that 'I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing'?"

Yes, our Lord Jesus Christ has also, through His suffering and death provided a righteousness in which we may appear before the throne of God. Our heavenly Father says, "As long as you hold this attitude of admitting your own absolute failure, your own bankruptcy, your ruin, and asking for mercy for Christ's sake, then I shall not see you in your own self any more, but I shall always see you in my Son. Whenever I look at you, I will look at

you through My Son and 'this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' and all who appear before My throne in His name, I am well pleased in them all." This is what the Psalmist means when he says, "Blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered."

When God has thus in Christ set us free from the guilt and the stain of sin, He has also dealt with us in our relation to the law, or the law's relation to us. The law pronounced a curse upon us, saying, "Cursed is everyone that doeth not everything that is written in this book of the law." And that curse, we will have to admit, we have deserved. Now we are set free from that law. The law may curse all sinners but that curse has nothing to do with the sinner who has been set free by Jesus Christ.

The law has also a great demand to make, saying, "Be ye perfect as I am perfect," and puts men under bondage, demanding that they be holy as God is holy, and yet not giving them any power to be holy. But now that we have come to God in Christ we are made free from the bondage of the law. Indeed, the law may accuse us and condemn us if we happen to break it, but we may now, for Christ's sake, answer the law and say, "God does not deal with me any more on the basis of the law. I have another relationship with God. He has received me on an entirely different basis. I know that I have broken the

law and I admit that I am worthy of the curse of the law. But God has accepted me on an entirely different basis than the law. He has dealt with me now on the basis of the merits and the righteousness of His Son Jesus Christ. He has told me that 'if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' I also have His promise that He will write His law on my mind and in my heart."

We should even cast out this "bondwoman and her son." (See Gal. 4. 21–31.) They have no room in our heart any more. We are not to be tormented by them. I may actually boldly say, "It is time for you to leave now, for in this home there is only the relationship of father and son, and bondservant has no place here." I can look into my Father's face and for Christ's sake be free from all the bondage of the law.

When God has thus set the repentant sinner free, then He also announces that this forgiven, delivered sinner He will now adopt as His own child and we become the children of God by adoption. "For as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God." What is that right? That is God's declaration at His throne that "I do hereby adopt this penitent sinner and declare that he has a right to sonship in My house."

Now all this is ours by faith. "If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Note, "if ye abide in My word." Justification is what we have been speaking of and the Bible says that justification is by faith alone.

We ought perhaps to point out some of the fallacies in connection with this doctrine. The Roman Catholic church says that justification is by faith, but it is by faith and works, not by faith alone. In fact, the Roman Catholic church calls it a bad and wicked doctrine to hold that justification is by faith alone. They also teach that faith is a merit on account of which the sinner is acceptable to God.

It is, however, sadly enough, not only the Roman Catholics who think that justification is not by faith alone. It often happens that penitent, awakened sinners really think that they are going to be saved by the merit of their faith. Instead of having faith in Christ and letting the Son set them free, they want to have faith in their faith and hold that faith is an attitude of heart that they must get into, which they can then present to God and on account of which God will forgive them their sins. That is, "God, now, having found faith in me, has at last found something with which He can be pleased and satisfied. Now He can forgive me my sins because I believe." No, that is not the teaching of the Word

of God. Not on account of faith are we justified, but by faith.

Even the experienced Christian often falls into the same fallacy, especially when he has been tripped up in some sin and has failed to live as his conscience tells him he should live and as in his heart he earnestly wants to live. When he has to admit a failure, then there arises within him this fear, "Now I am not acceptable before God because I cannot present to Him a holy life to-day."

How did you come to God the first time you came? Did you then come with a holy life? Did you then believe that you were set free from the stain of your sins because you had something in you that was acceptable before God? Have we not seen that repentance consists in our admitting our absolute bankruptcy and that faith is that act of our will in which we go to God and admit our desperate state and plead for mercy for Christ's sake? Then we are saved by grace. That is, it is all undeserved and it is all given unto us by God for Christ's sake and it belongs to those who cast themselves upon Jesus and intrust the eternal destiny of their soul into His hands.

When we see clearly that justification is this act in heaven, in which we are set free and are free indeed, then we will also have the blessed experience in our heart of having a conscience that is set free. When our conscience accuses us we may answer and

say, "I shall just be still before God, for I have left everything with Jesus Christ who is my Advocate with the Father. I can trust Him who died for me. He knows how to handle my case."

It is also God's will that we shall be set free from the bondage of sin. In this Scripture that we have before us, Jesus says, "Everyone that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin," but He certainly gives hope that the Son can set us free from such bondage too. He encourages us to believe that we shall not have to commit sin, that even though we still have an evil nature that tends to sin, the Son dwelling in us will, by His own strength and power, provide the way of escape in every temptation. We are indeed to be tempted, that has a part to play in our spiritual growth, but we are also to have in Christ the way of escape. We are to be strengthened in Him so as to overcome and be victorious. That, of course, means sanctification, the growth of experience in the life that is in His name.

We have especially tried to see the basis upon which we may have absolute hope and confidence that we may have "life in His name." We ought to go back to it often and look into what God has promised He will do for penitent sinners in Christ, so that we will not be depending on any faith, confidence or assurance that we have within ourselves, but will always depend entirely upon His Word, for "if ye abide in My Word, then are ye truly My disciples."

Many think that they must feel their sorrow and feel their faith before they can come to Jesus. But the blessed gospel message is that not only may we come but God commands us to come to Jesus even with the confession that we cannot feel sorry and that our heart is dead and cold and can feel no faith in Him. We are asked of God to come to Jesus and we may indeed come just as we are. And as we have pointed out before, it really is the very heart of faith, that we come to Jesus confessing just what we are and intrusting this soul that does not even feel anything, into His Saviour hands. It would be wonderful if seeking souls could see that.

Often they are not even guided as they should be. They are told, "You must feel sorry for your sins," even though they cannot. They are told, "You must have faith in Jesus if you are going to be saved," without being told what that faith really is. How sorry should I be? I should be so sorry that I realize that I must go and make confession. When I have been so sorry, then I have been as sorry as God wants me to be. And what is the faith? The faith is that act of my will when I choose to bring my

sins, my sin-sick soul, to Jesus and tell Him, "I want Thee to save me."

But now it is God's intention and purpose that we should also experience assurance. He has not called us to walk in darkness. Jesus has said:

"I am the Light of the world. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life."

Assurance is the flower and the fruit of faith. Assurance can only come to those who, in faith, have intrusted their soul into the hands of Jesus. To expect to have assurance without having come to Jesus with our sins and asked Him for salvation is just as foolish as to expect a flower and fruit without any stem and without any root. You may make an artificial flower, but that is not really a flower. You may work up a feeling of assurance for a little time, but it will not last. It is only a wax flower and as soon as any real heat is applied to it, it melts. But the assurance that is the flower of faith, is the assurance that never shrinks no matter what happens to us. Such assurance we sing of in the hymn:

"Oh, for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by many a foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of poverty or woe."

The ninth chapter of the Gospel by John is a wonderful illustration of how men come to assurance.

You remember that, having seen the blind man—and I always like to note that we are told that Jesus saw him before he saw Jesus—in answer to questions from the disciples Jesus makes this statement, "While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."

I like to think of what that word must have meant to the blind man as he sat there. He had never seen light. No doubt he had asked people about light, had heard them speak of it and had been told that light is what helps you see, but he has never seen light. Now, suddenly, he hears a voice say, "I am the Light of the world." I wonder if he would not be led to think, "Why, this must be what makes people see. People have told me that it is the light that helps them to see and here is somebody that says, 'I am the Light of the world.'" I am sure that Jesus meant that those words should be a call to the blind man.

Then we are told how Jesus helped him to understand that He also wanted to be light for this blind man. He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle. He took that clay and put it on the eyes of the blind man and then He told him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." The man went and washed and came, seeing.

Here you have a double sign. First, the acts of Jesus and His command to the blind man are a sign

of what Jesus wanted to do for him. The clay on his eyes was a sign of his blindness. That he was to go and wash in the pool of Siloam would teach him that just as the water of the pool would wash the clay off his eyes, so Christ would remove from his eyes that which made it impossible for him to see.

And John is careful to tell us that Siloam, the name of the pool, means Sent. You know that pool had not received that name by accident. That had all been in the plan of God. Just as surely as this man was born blind in order that he might glorify God, just so surely was that pool named Siloam for the benefit of that man and us. For we remember that Jesus had said in the hearing of the blind man, "We must work the works of Him that sent me." And now the blind man is told to go and wash in the pool that is called Sent.

Secondly, what happened to the blind man is a sign of what Jesus wants to do for all men, for all are born blind. The Holy Spirit, through the Word, teaches us about our blindness by putting clay on us. I have sometimes wondered if that clay does not represent what we see when we are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, if the clay is not the experience of the sin that we see in the light of God's demands when He says, "Be ye holy as I am holy." The law of God heaps clay on me and shows me how wicked and sinful I am. But then comes the plain and

simple command to go and wash in Jesus Christ. And what is faith? Why, simply that I go like the blind man did and ask Jesus to wash me. He came seeing.

But now I want you to see how that blind man had *the courage of his faith.* When the neighbors, being curious about this man who looked like the blind beggar and yet now could see, began to ask about it, his answer was immediately, "I am he." "But how is it that you can see?" "Why, a man named Jesus put clay on my eyes and told me to go and wash. I went and washed and came seeing." This was his first public confession of Jesus. Now all he knew of Jesus and all he could confess was, "A man named Jesus."

Because this was done on the Sabbath day it was reported to the religious leaders. They examined the man and there was a difference of opinion as to whether or not Jesus was a sinner because He did this on the Sabbath. They asked the man for his judgment, "What do you think He is?" "I think He is a prophet." Do you see? Having confessed the *man Jesus,* he is now himself given grace to see that the Man who did that for him was more than simply man. *He must be a prophet.*

After his parents have been examined, and they did not dare to say one way or another because of the decision that had already been made by the lead-

ers, that anyone who confessed Jesus as the Christ was to be excommunicated, the man is recalled. They tell the man, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." You see their situation is that if they should admit of the miracle, they will have to admit that Jesus is God. So they say to the man, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." His answer, "Whether He is a sinner or not, I do not know. I cannot solve for you any theological problems, not being a theologian, *but this one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*"

You see, he has been thinking. This questioning of him by so many people has aroused thought in him, and note that he has the courage of his faith. He dares, in the face of danger, to hold to that "whereas I was blind, I can now see." And after some further questioning he arrives at this conclusion in their presence. "If He were not from God, He could not do what He has done for me, for it was never heard that anybody could open the eyes of the blind." To which he receives the answer by the leaders, "You, altogether born in sin, do you try to teach us?" And they excommunicate him, cast him out.

See how his assurance has grown. When he accepted Jesus' command and went and washed, he had an experience. He came seeing. He confessed

Jesus the man, he confessed Jesus the prophet, he confessed Jesus the miracle worker, he confessed Jesus as having come from God.

Now see *the reward of his confession.* Jesus found him. Jesus always finds those who have confessed Him. He asked Him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" How ready this man is to believe! "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe?" "Thou hast both seen Him (significant phrase), and He it is that speaketh unto thee." And we are told that he bowed down and worshipped Jesus. You see there was given him this vision of Christ, which gave him full assurance, not only that Jesus was the one who had brought about the healing of his eyes, but that Jesus was none less than his Saviour God, before whom he bowed and worshipped.

It is to those who have the courage of their faith and dare to step out and confess Christ, that He also reveals Himself so that they may have the assurance that He really is their Saviour. In all the experiences of their life, He reveals Himself to them. He gives them the witness of the Holy Spirit, who testifies with their spirit that they are the children of God. They are able to open the Word of God and trace in that Word their own experiences. And as they trace the will of God and what God wants to do for men in that Word, their enlightened mind and heart can see and say, "That is just exactly

what God has done for me." And so they can be glad and rejoice.

Note that a public confession of Christ has a place in the process of arriving at more full assurance, for we remember that Paul has said, "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Now, when a man has believed with the heart unto righteousness he surely is saved. If he, by faith, has righteousness, *he is saved,* and yet Paul says, "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." By salvation I think that Paul here means the enjoyment in his own heart of the righteousness that is in Christ, spiritual health and strength, the assurance of possessing that righteousness.

So faith and assurance are not identical. Assurance comes from faith, faith issues in assurance. Faith is the stem, rooted in Christ, assurance is the blossom springing from this stem.

We are not saved by assurance, we are saved by faith. Faith can exist without assurance, but assurance can never exist without faith. Assurance without faith is false security. Faith without assurance, though it saves, yet is incomplete, for the purpose of God in Christ is to bring faith to assurance.

Faith is a simple act of the will in which the sinner, realizing his lost condition, intrusts his soul to

Jesus. Assurance is the confidence that Christ has cared and will continue to care for the soul thus intrusted to Him.

The more you know Jesus, the more assurance you will have. To know Him is to have confidence in Him. Assurance will never be gained by searching for it in your own heart and feelings. You gain assurance by looking to Jesus, and learning to know through the Word of God what a Saviour He is.

"Unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ." (Col. 2. 2.)

Like God

When faith has blossomed into assurance, then we are truly living the "life in His name." In this life we are actually sharing the life of God Himself. That is what "in His name" means. God comes to us, giving us of His life. God has actually created in us a new life so that we are a new man in Christ, He has given us of His own life in order to create that life in us.

See how this is put in John 14:

"Because I live, ye shall live also. In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him. If a man love Me, he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you,

not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful."

See here how our Lord Jesus has promised that the Triune God, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, will actually come and make His abode in us; that He has chosen now to have living temples here on earth and to dwell in them. Theologically, this has been called the mystical union and I am afraid that many Christians have thought that to mean the mysterious union, something so mysterious that no one can really appreciate what it means. Therefore we have chosen to put aside from our thinking, what our Lord has meant should be very real to us, that God will make His abode in us and thus share with us His life, His love, His peace, His joy, His light, His power for the living of the "life in His name."

So we see that this life shares His very nature. It has certain characteristics that are like the characteristics of God Himself. When we have the "life in His name," then we love God. The natural man cannot love God, but the man who has been born again and has received life from God, he can love God. The life that he now has shares the nature of God and responds to God in love. Therefore, Jesus says here, "If a man love Me, he will keep My commandments," indicating that when we share the "life in His name" then we will love Him. He also

says, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." "Herein is love" —in that we have first loved God? No, but that God has first loved us and given us His Son and through Him made it possible for us to become the children of God, and that then, when we, by the grace of God, are born again to be His children, we can love God and not until then.

Now, then, love of God is not a feeling only. It is a feeling towards God, surely, it is an attraction towards Him, but it is a feeling that constrains us to do something. Love of Christ constrains us in our will to decide that, "I will consecrate myself unto God. If He has loved me so that He gave me His Son, if the Son has loved me so that He died for me and now lives to make intercession for me, if the Holy Spirit has loved me so that He has called, enlightened, and worked upon my heart and helped me to accept Jesus, then I in turn will also decide to consecrate myself unto the loving service of my Father, Redeemer and Sanctifier." And love is really not love, it is only a passing emotion unless it has led us to that consecration, to that complete surrender of self and all that we are and have into His hands, unto His service.

You remember that we say in the Catechism in the explanation of the Second Article, that "Jesus has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, in

order that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him." When I have accepted His redemption and say that I love Him, then my love must manifest itself in the surrender to Him whom I recognize as having purchased me to be His own.

Here many souls are troubled. They say, "Yes, if I only could surrender to Christ, but that is where I have my trouble. If I only could surrender everything. I love Him and I want to serve Him, but when it comes right down to a test on this or that point in my life, there is where I fail. I cannot surrender to Him."

Well then, the only thing to do is to surrender your surrender to Him too. For it is just as true in surrendering as it is in believing, that you cannot surrender except by His grace and His help. And He is so gracious that we may surrender our surrender to Him too, and tell Him that we want to leave it to Him to work it out in our life.

And when we have prayed God, in Jesus' name, to help us to surrender and consecrate ourselves to Him, then we should go to Him and do what we have asked Him to help us to do. Go and tell Him, "I do hereby in this moment and by this act of worship consecrate myself, my life, all that I am and have and all that I ever hope to be unto Thee and Thy service."

Then I want to tell you that Jesus takes you at your word. He then accepts that consecration in His love and mercy, and though you may fail to live up to it, you may be sure that He does not fail to remember. He will also bring to your remembrance your failures and work repentance in your heart over them and bring you back to Him and to the consecration. He has accepted you and after all, it is He that must consecrate you.

So let us not be worried about surrendering to Jesus. It is not something to be worried about, but rather something to rejoice over. Rejoice that you may go and consecrate yourself unto Him and that you may then leave it all to Him. Rejoice that in the practice of the consecrated life He is going to help you. He is going to work it all out by His own grace and power.

Another characteristic of the "life in His name" is that we not only love God, but, loving God, we hate sin. The unregenerate sinner does not hate sin, he loves his sin, he enjoys his sin and when he is awakened then that is what causes him so much heartache. He thinks, "If I could only say I hate my sins, then I could truly say I love Jesus." But he has to confess that he cannot even say, "I hate my sin." But when God shares His life with him, then he hates sin.

Now in this chapter Jesus shows what a teacher

He is by putting that in the positive instead of the negative; by saying, "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him." Because I have the life that is in Christ, I hate sin. Therefore, I give myself to the keeping of the commandments of Jesus and living according to His will, and whoever sets out to do that, he has the promise that Jesus will manifest Himself unto him. And Jesus' manifesting of Himself will be in this way—that He will help him to shun and flee sin and will help him to live according to the will of God.

Then too, when I share the life that is in His name, I also love all others who share that life. I love them because we are sharing the same glorious gift and because it is one of His commandments that we should love one another. Now the unregenerate person finds no attraction in the children of God, it is tedious and boresome to be in their presence and company. But to those who are born again and share God's life, there is nothing quite so pleasant as to be where God's children are. By that love they are enabled to overlook much of weakness and faults and difficulties that they find in each other because they recognize that they have been together before the cross of Jesus Christ and there have had to confess their own desperate helplessness. There we

were all brought down to the same level. There we were laid bare and we could not plead our riches or our poverty. There we who had different standings in the world and worldly relationships, could make no mention of them; we were all stripped absolutely and came and said:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling,
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace."

And so, when we rise from having thus been leveled at His cross, then all the barriers to loving each other have been swept away and we have found each other in Him.

But also towards self and within self this "life in His name" shares the characteristics of God. For in Himself, God has peace and so I may have peace when I have His life. That is why Jesus says here, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." The Word of God tells us that Christ has in Himself reconciled God and man, and every sinner who has come to God in Christ has come into perfect peace in the relationship with God. Now it matters not whether he feels any such peace in his own heart. The fact is that there is a "peace of God which passeth all understanding" in heaven and that is a perfect peace. That peace is by God given to every sinner that has come to God in Jesus' name. There

is peace with God whether I feel that peace in my heart or not, when I am cleansed in the blood of Christ and forgiven for His sake.

But because God has sent us the Spirit of His Son to abide within us, we may also share that peace in our hearts. When we look unto heaven and see that now there is nothing between us and God, the natural consequence is that in our heart, in which there has been brought to pass the miracle of a new birth, we also share that peace.

That peace drives away all anxieties. Therefore Jesus says, "Let not your heart be troubled." What have you to be troubled about when everything is right with God? When God is satisfied and there is reconciliation, perfect and complete in heaven? Then why should you be troubled about anything? Your difficulties? Your sufferings? But in the measure that you see that you have peace with God in heaven, you will rejoice in your sufferings, not be anxious about them but thank God for them.

Peace, too, drives away all fear, for Jesus here says, "Neither let your heart be fearful." If God is now on your side, if God is now your Father, if the Triune God has consecrated you to the extent of living in you, then what have you to fear?

But peace and joy are very modest, yes, even elusive guests of the saved soul. You cannot stand at the door of your heart, watching for peace and joy,

hoping to take hold of them and drag them in. You will never even see them, much less touch them. But only leave your door open, go about your business, give yourself to the worship of Jesus and to the fervent serving of Him, and all unknown to you peace and joy will quietly slip in through the open door. Quietly, thrillingly, there will dawn in your soul the reality of their presence. "They have come! They are here!" But do not look at them too sharply, they will flee from you. Do not try to hold and hug them, they are too modest for such handling. Keep on with your worship and your service and the assurance of their presence will rest upon you like a benediction. Peace and joy will join you in the melody of your glad song of praise to Jesus.

Life Must Be Nourished

It is the nature of all life to grow and develop. So, too, of the "life in His name." We do not need to have any anxious care and worry as to whether or not the "life in His name" will grow and develop, for it is life, and God Himself, having given the life, stands as surety for its growth and development.

You remember Jesus' parable of the husbandman who, planting the seed in the ground, then leaves it there and "the earth beareth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear." But notice that "the earth beareth fruit of herself." The Lord did not say that the seed that was planted in the ground bears fruit of itself. No, for without the earth the seed would never bear fruit at all, for the earth provides the nourishment for the seed.

All life, in order to continue and to grow and develop, must be nourished. Now these things that we are saying about the "life in His name" are so simple and so self-evident that I am afraid we may pass them by without realizing how tremendously important they are. If the "life in His name" is to continue to grow and develop and bear fruit, it must

be nourished. And Jesus has provided for nourishment of this life. As He Himself is the source of the life, so He is also Himself the nourishment of the life. And when He says that the "earth beareth fruit of herself," and is thus suggesting that the earth is the source of the nourishment for the seed, so He Himself is the source of the nourishment for the "life in His name."

It is surely not without purpose that, in the Gospel by John, the fifth chapter, which tells us how Jesus is the Life-Giver, is followed by the sixth chapter in which He claims to be the Bread of Life.

You may summarize all His teachings in the sixth chapter in the verse:

As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me."

This verse contains a parallelism or comparison. Note it carefully: "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father," on the one side. Then the comparison: "so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me."

Now there is a surprise in that comparison. You would not have expected the phrase, "so he that eateth Me." Rather you would have expected something like this: "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father; so he that is sent by Me, he also shall live because of Me." But Jesus de-

liberately surprises you there and says, "so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me." Another way that He might have said it and not brought it in as a surprise would have been, "As I eat the living Father and live because of Him; so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me."

Now, I wonder if Jesus did eat the living Father! And may we from His eating the Father learn what it means that we should eat Him? In the fourth chapter of the Gospel by John, Jesus is urged to eat. You remember that the disciples come from the village with food and say, "Rabbi, eat." "But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not. The disciples therefore said one to another, Hath any man brought Him aught to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work." Now you see why Jesus says, "As the living Father sent Me," instead of saying, "As I eat the living Father." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." In doing the will of His Father, Jesus found perfect satisfaction for His soul. He found that His soul was nourished and strengthened in the measure that He gave Himself unto the doing of the will of His Father.

What that means is set forth in detail in verses 19 to 29 of the fifth chapter of John's Gospel. Look at some of those details. "The Son can do nothing

of Himself." That is *dependence.* It was because He could do nothing of Himself that He had to eat the Father and it was necessary that He recognize His dependence if He was going to eat the Father.

If we are going to eat Jesus, it is necessary that we recognize that without Him we can do nothing. Remember that Jesus has said, "Apart from Me ye can do nothing." Now it is possible to attempt many things without Christ. It is possible to be very active outwardly even in religious matters, apart from Him. But it is not possible to *accomplish* anything apart from Jesus. Nor will we go and eat Jesus until we realize that apart from Him we can do nothing. It really means spiritual hunger, you see, to recognize that.

Oh, how blessed it would be if God's people would recognize more than they do that apart from Jesus Christ they can do nothing,—would really recognize their absolute dependence upon Him for everything!

"The Son can do nothing of Himself," and so what did He do? He looked to the Father. "But what He seeth the Father doing." He was so absolutely dependent upon His Father that He would not even start out to do anything until He had first seen His Father do it, until He had first seen the plan in the mind and heart of His Father. And so He gave Himself to looking to the Father, seeking communion with the Father to find out what was in the

mind and the heart of His Father. Trusting was a part of His eating the Father.

He would have us do the same. Jesus would have us look to Him, and He also wants to show us. He has said, "He that followeth Me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He has promised that He will open to His own children His mind and His heart to show them what His will is in all things, so that looking to Him they may learn to know what is in His mind and heart and may also do it. This is part of our eating Jesus.

But He not only looked to His Father. When He saw what His Father was doing, then He also did it. "For what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." He then gave Himself unto the doing of what He had seen in the mind and heart of His Father. That was His *obedience.*

He wants us to do the same. Yes, He has said, "My sheep follow Me, for they know My voice." They actually set out to follow Him. They give themselves unto the doing of what they see is the will of God in Christ Jesus. Nothing will deter them from that, no selfish consideration, so that they would say, "Well, I know that Jesus perhaps wants me to do this, but if I do it, what will it mean for me? Will it cost me this convenience or that? Will it cost me this opinion of my fellowmen and that? Will it cost me money? Will it cost me time?

Will it cost me effort? Will it make me tired?" Such considerations can never enter in if we want to eat Jesus. Then the only question is, "Is this already done in the mind and heart of Jesus, my Saviour? If it is, then there is nothing left for me but to do it, too, no matter what the cost."

Then we are told, "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth." What kind of a Son did the Father love and show all His plans? The dependent, seeking Son. It is the dependence of the babe that calls forth the love of the mother heart. So the Father loved such a Son, opened up His heart to that Son and revealed to Him more and more of what He had in His heart to do.

Jesus has also said that He would not call us servants, but friends. "No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known unto you." Jesus actually is able and He wants to reveal to His followers His own inner mind and heart, the plans that He has there, the work that He wants to accomplish in the world. He does that through the Word of God. When a lover of Jesus, who gives Him personal devotion, studies that Word and yields in obedience to that Word, then Christ opens the Word and its meanings more and more.

And finally we read, "And greater works than these will the Father show Him, that ye may marvel." There was to be increasing revelation to Jesus. As He ate His Father, that is, as He gave Himself unto the obedience of doing His Father's will the Father also showed Him more and more of His will.

Jesus will do the same for all those who thus intrust themselves to Him. He will reveal Himself more and more. He has even said to us when He compared our works with His—"greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father."

So, you see, that to eat Jesus means to read the Word of God, to feed our souls with the Word of God. But it does not mean only to read that Word. It means, when I read it, to enter into a personal relationship with the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is there presented. It means that I have a hunger for Him. It means that I actually go to Him and receive what He has to give of Himself. It means that I digest what He gives me in His Word by actually putting it into living practice. Only so can this life be nourished. So you see that when Jesus says, "I am the Bread of Life," there is a deep meaning in it. If we are going to appreciate it and really be fed by that Bread of Life, it is necessary that we actually give ourselves wholly unto Him.

In this connection we should also mention that

in His love and mercy, He has provided a very special way by which we may eat Him in the Lord's Supper, where He promises to give Himself to us in a sacramental way. There, in, with and under the consecrated bread and wine, our glorified Lord actually comes into the mouth and the person of everyone that goes to the table. And for those who believe in Him and trust in Him, this means that they, in that moment, are sharers in a supernatural, miraculous way, with all the life and power and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Think, then, how we have robbed ourselves of nourishment and robbed Him of the opportunity to feed us when we have not gone to His Word and to the Lord's Supper and sought Him for our personal appropriation.

How finicky we are in our appetites! We like this and we do not like that, even when it comes to spiritual food. May God forgive us those sins and help us to really hunger and thirst for Christ. We ought in this connection to ask ourselves, "What have I been feeding my soul?" If I compare the time and the effort that I have given towards other things with the time and the effort that I have given towards eating Christ in His Word and in His Sacrament, how will it compare? Is it any wonder that God's people are spiritually weak, when they feed their souls with the things that are dished out

to them by the modern press, for example, or the theatre or movie?

Here is the reason why such spending of time is wrong. Not only that much of it is actually sinful in itself, but because it is not food for the soul and the time spent upon it is often taken from the time that should be taken for feeding and actually living out that for which Christ gave Himself to us. How can we expect to see a strong, growing and serving church when the members of the church feed their souls with the rot and the trash that comes from the printing press of to-day and is shown on the screen and on the stage? Why, it not only is not food, it is poison, and it kills!

Oh, pray that God will make His people to hunger for Jesus; so that we will want to be in close personal touch and communion with Him; so that we will want to do in our lives the things that are in accordance with His will; so that to the willing and obedient children He may actually impart of His own strength and life.

The Death of the Self-life

In living the "life in His name" it is very important to remember that *"that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."*

First of all, what does our Lord mean when He speaks of the flesh? When the Bible uses the expression "the flesh," as Jesus here does, it does not mean only our bodies. It means the natural self. It means the nature with which we were born into this world, which simply dwells in our bodies like in a house and makes use of the body as an instrument to carry out the desires, the passions, the lusts that are within. And, Oh, how the flesh can whip and drive the body!

Just take, for example, in the matter of eating. What a desire there can be to enjoy eating, even to the extent of abusing the body. We are told that the old Romans at their feasts used to gorge themselves as much as they could. Then, having brought feathers with them, they would tickle their throats until they vomited up what they had eaten so they could begin over again and go through the whole feast once more. That certainly was whipping up

the body! Just so as to satisfy the passions and the lusts of the flesh!

I have not heard of people doing that in these days, but they do things that are very much like that. For example, people live as fast a life as they possibly can. They deprive their body of the proper rest and the proper food and exercise and then, when they are so weary and so tired they cannot go on any longer, then they take to baths and massages and to the eating of drugs in order to whip up the body and force the body to satisfy the lusts of the flesh.

By these examples you can plainly see that the flesh and the body are not the same. The flesh is that perverted, wicked nature that even abuses the body in which it is housed.

Now when we enter into the life that is in His name, when Christ shared that life with us, then He shared it with those who have that sinful nature, so that, from the time we are born again we have two natures dwelling in the same person. And it is God's intention and purpose that they shall live together. However, God's purpose with the flesh is that it shall be crucified and put to death, while His purpose with the life of the spirit is that it shall grow and develop and glorify His name.

Now, the sinner who has repented has already delivered his flesh to Christ for crucifixion. He saw

the evil nature of his own self. He confessed it. He fled to Christ. He said he wanted to be saved by Christ no matter what it cost and that he was willing forever to be done with the flesh and live, not for the satisfying of its lusts, but for the satisfying of the will of his Saviour. But even though he has thus delivered his flesh to crucifixion, crucifixion is a slow death and the flesh is not annihilated. He will still experience many sad things on account of the flesh.

Our Lord has said in the twelfth chapter of the Gospel by John,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; but he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

Here you have the word "life" used three times. "He that loveth his *life* loseth it; and he that hateth his *life* in this world shall keep it unto *life* eternal." The first two times the word "life" is used it means the natural life and in the Greek a different word is used for the word which is translated "life eternal." So here our Lord is saying that if we are really going to grow in the life eternal, it is necessary that we hate our natural life, hate the life in this world.

That is exactly what we experience in repentance.

Everyone who really has repented hated himself. Not only for what he has said and thought and done, but for what he is. If we are to grow in sanctification, if the flesh is to be conquered, it is necessary that we continue to hate the life that is in this world. That means that we are to have absolutely no confidence in self.

Here is the very heart of what it means to crucify the flesh. For the stronghold of the flesh is self-confidence. "My opinion is surely worth something," we think. "I surely have some strength. I surely must do something myself. Am I not to fight and in fighting, win the victory over sin and iniquity in me? And if I cannot do it by myself, have I not the promise that Christ will help me to do it? So that if I just go at it, I will have the help of Christ and then we will win. He and *I* will win!" Do you not see how self is still there? As long as we thus cling to self, every trial, every test issues finally in failure. I have to hate self if Christ is going to win, for it is not self that is going to win, but Christ.

And so Jesus draws us unto Himself, away from ourselves. And that is the very heart of sanctification. We read in this same chapter, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." Now that is what the crucified, resurrected Saviour is seeking to do with all His children. He seeks to draw them away from themselves to

Himself. Away from any trust and confidence in self, in their own nature and power, to place all confidence and trust in Him. And just as in salvation I had to absolutely flee from self and intrust myself to Christ to be saved, so too, in sanctification and in conquering the flesh, I have to flee from self and intrust my soul, my spiritual life, to Christ, so that He may by His strength and power work the blessed ministry of sanctification.

From this we see that sanctification is in the beginning and at the heart of it an inner experience. So many people are prone to think that sanctification is outward, the putting off of this action and that action, and the doing of this thing and that thing. That, however, is the fruit of sanctification and not the sanctification itself. But the sanctification itself is an inner experience in the inner man. And it lies just in this point—that more and more I depart from self, hate self, crucify self within and turn all my thought and my attention to Christ, to the resting in Him.

Now the Scripture speaks of fighting. We should "fight the good fight of faith." That surely means to make an effort to do something. But what am I to direct the fighting against? Just against that sinful self, so that I will come away from trust in that self to resting in Christ. He is fighting the best who has fought his way from self-confidence

to Christ-confidence. So I am to give my effort, not to the examining of self, not to the holding of myself from this and that and the other thing, struggling not to do it, not to the forcing of myself to carry out this and that and the other thing. All that may indeed have an outward show of sanctification, but it has not any real power in keeping us from sin.

But I am to give my effort to the thought about Christ, filling my mind with His Word, with the descriptions of Him given in that Word of God, and filling my inner life with a personal communion with Him, and the less I think of myself and the more I think of Him and live in communion with Him, the more the flesh is crucified and the "life in His name" grows and develops. If we could only see this. Let us pray that God will open the eyes of our mind so that we will see.

I tell you that it is nothing but self-pride that often causes the children of God to be examining themselves anxiously to see whether or not they have advanced in this and that and the other thing and whether they are failing in this or that. It may appear to be a very earnest thing and a very sincere and serious matter, proving that we are sincere, earnest Christians. It may appear to be that, but back of it there may still lie the pride of flesh. I am so important, you see, that I must examine myself. But it is all the pride of the flesh and there

is nothing Satan and the flesh would like to see us do more than to see us stay there looking into our failures and our shortcomings.

But repentance, the daily repentance, means that I flee from self into the arms of Christ and tell Him that the self-life is so terrible that I do not want to look at it any more. "I am through with it and I hate it and I am not going to have this sort of morbid pleasure in looking at it all the time. Christ, help me to leave it and to flee into Thy holy arms and dwell in Thee, not in the sinfulness of self, but in the holiness and the beauty of my Saviour."

There is strength. There is where Christ would have us live. There is where we will grow, looking into His glory and seeing Him, being changed from glory into glory and being made more and more like Him. That is what crucifies the flesh. That is what holds the flesh down and helps the life of the Spirit to grow and develop.

We ought also to think of the relation between this element of sanctification, the killing of the flesh, and the sanctification that became ours before the throne of God when we were justified. Let us remember always that, having fled to Christ with our sin, we have perfect holiness in heaven. God said once to us, "For Christ's sake, you are My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased." Let us remember that as long as we are in Christ no failures on

account of our sinful nature have any weight in God's opinion of us. In Christ we are perfectly holy.

That is why Jesus said to His disciple Peter, when He wanted to wash his feet and Peter objected, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." Peter impulsively said, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" And Jesus answered, "He that is bathed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Having been bathed in Christ, having been washed in His blood, He assures us that at the throne of God, as far as having part with Him is concerned, we are absolutely every whit clean.

But we do need to wash our feet in the daily experience of sanctification. That is, we do need continually to confess the sins of the flesh and flee from the flesh to Christ. That is washing the feet.

Now, if we do not see this relation between the bath and the foot-washing, then our experiences in sanctification will be the experiences of those who are in bondage. But when we see and always keep before us that we are completely cleansed and holy at the throne of God in Christ, then you see, the experiences of the daily walk will not bring about that depression and anguish which torments so many of God's children. But with humble boldness on account of the cleansing that is ours in Christ we

may come with our failures to the throne, confessing them, and have the assurance that they are all forgiven. These are some of the rich joys and the marvelous privileges of the "life in His name."

Growth and Development

In the process of sanctification which takes place within those who are living the "life in His name," it is not only the sinful nature, the flesh, that is dealt with; but the new man too, must have his testings and his trials in order that he also may grow and develop.

We have said that Christ shares with us His very own life. We have said that the characteristics of that life are that it is holy, loves God, loves His Word, loves God's people and hates sin. And so one might wonder, What process of sanctification does that life need?

In this connection, we ought to remember that even Jesus, who was holy, of whom God said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," even He "learned obedience by the things which He suffered." And if Jesus, when He was a man, could not escape such testings, then certainly none of us should expect to escape either.

And Jesus has told us:

"I am the true Vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away: and every branch that

beareth fruit, He cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same beareth much fruit, for apart from Me ye can do nothing."

Here we are to observe closely that it is the fruit bearing branch that is to be cleansed. It is to be cleansed just because it is bearing fruit. The purpose is that it might bear more fruit and much fruit. The living branch, which is the fruit bearing branch, is the branch that must be cleansed.

God has many ways to bring about this cleansing. One way is that the new life which we receive in Christ has to meet the opposition of the old life. And here we see the purpose of God in not annihilating our sinful nature. The sinful nature is to serve the new nature in this, that the new nature will have to meet the opposition of the old and will grow strong in fighting the old nature.

Dr. Hallesby, in one of his books on the Christian life, likens these two natures to two boxers who are chained together. They never can escape each other and the one is chained to the other for the purpose of serving the other as a sparring partner. You

know, when boxers are training for a fight, they have others who are hired for the purpose of boxing with them to train them for the fight. And so God has intended that the evil nature in us shall be such a sparring partner for the new nature. We are never to escape but we are to be victorious.

In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City there is a statue, of heroic size, of two great wrestlers. It is entitled "The Two Natures." It shows one nature, the noble, the good, in victory over the evil nature. The evil nature is down and the good nature is over him, holding him down. But the evil nature has hold of the good nature by the feet and is hanging on with all his might. It is a wonderful statue, full of power and strength. And it teaches the same lesson. God means that we shall meet the opposition of Satan and the world through a nature that is within ourselves. And every victory over that nature means that the "life in His name" is that much stronger.

Then too, God makes use of the suffering that we meet in this world for cleansing. We live in a world of suffering people and sometimes wonder, "Why should God's people have to suffer?" Some people even think that it is a sign of being a child of God to escape all suffering. People have told me that. They say they know they are pleasing in the sight of God because everything goes well with them.

They say, "I get everything I ask from God and everything is pleasant and happy in my life, surely I must be pleasing in the sight of God." But that is not at all sure, for the Bible says, "The son whom He loveth He chasteneth," and we are even told that we may have some concern about whether or not we are His children if we are not chastened.

Now God has not taken us out of this world. Our Lord did not pray that His disciples should be taken out of the world but that they might be kept from the evil one while they were in the world. On account of sin this world is a world of suffering and God's children have to meet that suffering, too, in all kinds of ways. They should not even expect to escape it. But they may look at that suffering in an entirely different way than the worldling looks at it. They need not despair in suffering. They know that God knows all about this suffering and God is not permitting any suffering to come into their life, but that it will be for the purpose that He has intended. He is the husbandman, He is doing the cleansing and He knows just exactly how to cleanse. It is well that He does know that, otherwise He might cut away more than was necessary. He knows, however, that you must cut away some things. Yes, that even the fruit bearing branch must be cut down.

To the one who does not know anything about the nature of the vine, that might seem strange. When a branch of the vine is bearing fruit, you might think, "That branch I will have to let alone and next year I will get more fruit from it." But those who know the nature of the vine, know that if the fruit-bearing branch is going to bear more fruit next year, it will have to be cut down. And our heavenly Father knows that, too. And so, when we meet the suffering that all men meet in this world in some form or other, then we may have the comfort and assurance that our heavenly Father will not permit anything to happen to us but that it will be for our good and to the glory of His name, when we are living the "life in His name."

Then, too, there is a suffering that we may experience or may not, according to our choice. It is the suffering of confessing Christ before the world. That always brings suffering to God's children, in some way or other, and there a Christian may make a choice. He may decide, "I do not want to enter into the suffering of confessing Christ before the world," and so protect himself and spare himself, but only to his own great loss. God does not always force us to confess Him. No, there lies before us the opportunity. We may step in, we may confess and suffer on account of it. We may draw back. Drawing back, we may escape the suffering that

would have come with that confession, but we have lost so much. We have lost His pleasure over our confession and we have lost the strength that comes to those who meet and go through the suffering.

Finally, there is the suffering with others, the sympathetic suffering, the entering in under the burdens of others. Many Christians live such protected lives. They have everything the way they like to have it. They have no real need of any kind. They hear of the needs of others and it touches them a little, to the extent perhaps, of giving a little for the alleviation of someone else's need, but they never really feel the need of others. They never go in under the burden of anyone else. So we can escape that suffering with others. It is possible to see the man lying at the side of the road who has been robbed and beaten and pass by on the other side and even satisfy our conscience that, "I had this and that and the other duty to perform and therefore could not stop to help him." But, in doing that we have missed something, we have lost something.

It does often hurt very much to enter in under the burden of someone else. It takes time and it takes effort and it takes suffering in your soul, but it means growth. Here is another reason why many of God's children do not grow and become strong in the spiritual life. They avoid everything that will bring them any hardship, any trial, any suffer-

ing. This is what I think Jesus particularly meant when He said, "If any man would come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me." By the cross He meant that suffering, those trials, that you deliberately accept for Christ's sake and for the sake of those who belong to Christ.

Now the secret of growth of the "life in His name," or, to use Jesus' figure, the strengthening of the branch in the vine, while we meet all these sufferings and trials and testings, is "abide in Me and I in you." "Abide in Me." That means the same as the expression so often used by Paul, "in Christ." "I in you," means the same as another expression used by Paul, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." To be in Christ, that is to be saved. We abide in Him by faith. All who have come to Christ and cast themselves upon Him, they are "in Christ." Then Christ has promised to be in them and work out His plan in their lives.

I think it is possible in Scripture, as well as in experience, to see three phases of abiding in Him, and He in us. In the first phase, we abide in Him when we believe that we are saved for His sake. He also then is in us, sharing His life with us and giving us grace to live a sanctified life. The young Christian feels satisfied with that. In fact, he is so overcome with joy in the knowledge that he is saved, that he does not even think very far beyond that.

But, having lived thus for a while, there comes to him the desire to serve that Lord and Master who saved him. He is not satisfied to have only for himself the wonderful joy of being saved. He wants to fulfill the will of Him who has saved him and so there may be a sort of crisis in his life. He must give Himself to the doing of the will of Christ. But he discovers when he sets out to serve Christ in accordance with His will, that he is so weak. He finds himself as unable to give Christ his service by his own strength as he was to save himself. He discovers how true it is that, "apart from Me ye can do nothing." And so, as he had to have "Christ in him" to give him life, so now he has to have "Christ in him" to give him strength and power to serve and he must come to Jesus over and over again, confess his failure and receive strength and power from Him.

But in doing that, he is not even then satisfied. For, in the experiences that he has, he discovers that, though he wants to do the will of his Lord, and is giving himself to the doing of it, there is a part in his life over which he does not have the control that he wants to have and he finds himself slipping in many things, both in his own personal life and in the service that he gives.

Again he is driven to Christ. "Apart from Me ye can do nothing." The Lord would have him learn

from his failures that he may and that he must come still closer, that he must find in Christ Himself his own personal satisfaction and strength and power. And so, by the grace of God, not by his own strength at all, he may see that which he has not seen before —that the Lord is calling him to a more personal fellowship with Him, an intimate, real fellowship. In this fellowship he is to love God not only in a general way, but in a very particular personal way he is to love God in Jesus Christ and find in Him his rest. "Abide in Me," and Christ promises, "I will be in you."

I simply mean this, that the Lord gives His children ever enlarged visions of Himself, and as He shows us more and more of what He would be for us, He also offers us the grace by faith to enter in. And as we do enter in and rest more and more in Him, He also is enabled to give us more and more of Himself and work out in our lives that which is according to His will, that which is fruit, more fruit and much fruit, and that which will thus glorify His Father's name.

And so, what we need most of all for the growth and development of the "life in His name" is to see more and more of Jesus. To see more and more of what He wants to be for us and in us. And we see that in His Word. There is where He will open to our mind's eye and the understanding of the inner man, the secrets of the "life in His name."

The Spirit-filled Life

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3. 5–8.

"Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7. 37–39.

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: ye know Him: for He abideth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate

(orphans) : I come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth Me no more; but ye behold Me: because I live, ye shall live also. In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you... But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." John 14. 16–20, 26.

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, He shall bear witness of Me: and ye also bear witness because ye have been with Me from the beginning." John 15. 26, 27.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you. And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that

are to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He taketh of Mine, and shall declare it unto you." John 16. 7–15.

"In that day ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father." John 16. 26, 27.

"Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." John 20. 21, 22.

The "life in His name" is the Spirit-filled life.

It was the Holy Spirit who caused us to be born into that life when we were brought to Jesus in baptism.

It was the Holy Spirit who gave us our childhood experiences in that life, when, even as children, we in the child's way, and with the child's capacity, were convicted of sin, confessed our sins and asked Jesus to forgive us, believing so implicitly as we did in His forgiveness.

It was the Holy Spirit who, in the days of youth, in the transition period when we were developing into men and women, came to us in a way that we

could never experience before and showed us the sinfulness of our own nature. Showed us in a way we could never experience before, how much we need Jesus and also showed us in a way we could never experience before, how wonderfully Jesus is the supply of all our need.

And it is the Holy Spirit who continues now to work in us the ministry of our Lord so that we may more and more experience the "life in His name"; that we may grow and develop and become that which Christ has intended and wants us to become.

In order to do this it is necessary that He work within us a ministry that will prepare more and more room for Himself, while, at the same time, there is less and less room for the selfishness of self. And so we are filled with the Holy Spirit when we are living the "life in His name," even though there may be a difference in the measure in which we are filled. The difference is on account of the varied growth and development, on account of the difference in room that there is within us for the Holy Spirit.

Then, too, we ought to remember that the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus has given and sent to us, is not some kind of a dead lump that is placed within us, nor is He some unintelligent force that has come to us, but a living person, who shares Himself with us and dwells within us. We ought to remember that

this living person has feelings, and having feelings, He can be grieved. And when He is grieved then He not only suffers, but we suffer, for then we are crowding Him out of our lives. And so we have to be filled again, having thus by grieving Him, lost some of the fulness of the Spirit that Jesus wanted us to have.

Now, the question naturally arises when we speak of these things, "How shall I be filled with the Spirit?" Which can be put also in this way, "How does the Spirit then, make room within us for more of Himself?" And that Jesus has told us when He said that the Holy Spirit would "convict us of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment." And that is what the Holy Spirit does for those who are living the "life in His name." He continues to show them what is sin in their lives, working in them also the grace to go to Jesus and confess their sins. That is to "walk in the light as He is in the light," laying bare before Jesus everything that the Holy Spirit has shown them is sinful.

But He also convicts them of righteousness. That is, He shows them the forgiveness that there is in Christ. He continues to make that real to them so that, having brought their sins to Jesus, they also rise from their confession with the assurance that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake and that they are dressed in His righteousness. So they

thank and praise Jesus for the forgiveness that is theirs, every day and every hour and every moment.

But He also convicts them of judgment by showing them that the prince of this world is judged. And thereby causes them to realize more and more that if they yield to the prince of this world, who works through the flesh and the world to tempt them, then they will also share the judgment that has already been pronounced upon the devil and his angels. And when they are shown that, and that becomes real to them, as the Holy Spirit can make it, then they are glad to flee from the devil, from the world and from their own flesh to Jesus and intrust themselves into His hands so that He may share with them the victory that He has already won over the devil and the world and sinful flesh.

That is how the Holy Spirit makes room for Himself within us and then fills us with Himself so that we are to live in the experience of realizing the sinfulness of sin, of having the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins, and in Christ living in victory over sin. And so you see, the Spirit-filled life is simply the natural Christian life, the "life in His name" as Jesus Christ has intended that His followers shall live. It is not some ecstatic experience by which we are caught away from a natural life in this world into something strange and unnatural. No, it is a walk with Jesus in our daily life.

Room for the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit always unites us more and more with Jesus. He never glorifies Himself, but always leads us to Christ and draws us nearer to Him. In doing this there are certain experiences that He leads us into, which experiences are evidences that the Holy Spirit really is working His ministry in our lives.

He will come to us through the Word and the Sacraments. For God has provided them as the means by which the Holy Spirit is given to us in our daily Christian life. And these means we are to use in prayer. We are to ask God to give us the Holy Spirit while we use the Word and the Sacraments.

When we do that, then we can expect that He will cause us to experience the sinfulness of sin. And so, when I have asked for the Holy Spirit, then I am more than ever convicted that I have a sinful nature and that I in my sinful nature have grieved Him in many ways. Then I should not despair but should realize that God has heard my prayer, that He has given me the Holy Spirit and that He now is working His blessed ministry in my life. Then the issue will rest upon what I do when I see the

sinfulness of my sin. If I begin to excuse and try to explain away my sins, then I grieve Him still more. But if I am willing that He should show me the sinfulness of sin and I make a speedy flight to Jesus with full and free and open confession, without excuses, then the Holy Spirit is having victory in my life and preparing more room for Himself.

Then, too, if I am going to be filled with the Holy Spirit more and more, it is necessary that I be obedient to the Holy Spirit. That is, that I permit Him to show me all that He wants to show. Not only that I am willing to recognize the sinfulness of some sins, but that I am willing that He should show me everything and anything that in any way grieves Him.

When we hear this said it is not difficult to respond and say, "Well, surely I would be willing that the Holy Spirit should show me everything that grieves Him in my life." And we might even say to God in our hearts, "Lord, do Thou show me to-day anything that in any way grieves the Holy Spirit." But then when the Lord shows us in His Word perhaps, or through the word of some friend or some spiritual guide, then have we not all again and again experienced how self rises to the defense and we do not really want to be shown everything that grieves the Holy Spirit? Especially if it touches upon our self-interest and our pride. But if we are going to

be filled with the Holy Spirit, we simply have to step on self, ask Jesus to take self and nail it to the cross. And surely here is one point where self is crucified, when, in spite of the unwillingness of the flesh, we hold ourselves open to conviction in everything that in any way might grieve the Holy Spirit.

And then too, if the Holy Spirit is going to have the room that He wants in our hearts, it is necessary that we be willing to receive victory over our sins, that we be willing that the Holy Spirit should take us through anything in order to bring about that victory.

At this one might say, "Well, surely every Christian is willing to have victory over his sins if only God will gain it for him, for he cannot overcome his sins in his own strength." Yes, no doubt, theoretically. But when it comes down to practical experience, oh, how many a Christian resists the Holy Spirit so that He cannot give the victory over sin! Yes, and will we not have to confess that we all have done that, for it costs self something when, in the "life in His name" we are to be made victorious over our sins. And so often self is not willing to pay the price.

If, for example, the besetting sin is the sin of worldliness and we take that to Jesus and ask that the Holy Spirit in Christ may set us free from that sin. Do you not see that that is going to cost some-

thing? It is going to cost us the pain of the break with the world. Are we willing to pay that price? Or would we rather cling to the sin and grieve the Holy Spirit?

Or, suppose my besetting sin is the sin of selfishness so that the whole plan of my life always centers in myself. I think of everything in the relation that it has to myself and I always want everybody else to think of everything in the relation that it has to me. I remember hearing Dr. Rinman of Sweden tell of a bird that is heard in India which has a very monotonous song, sounding something like, "Me, me, me, me, me." It keeps on saying all night long, "Me, me, me, me, me." He said there are so many Christians who are like that "me-bird."

Now, don't you see that if the Holy Spirit is going to set us free from that sin and make room for Himself in that corner of the heart, it is going to cost something? He will have to cause us to forget self and to think of others. Instead of always thinking of what is best for me, by God's grace my heart will be so changed that I will always think of what is best for others and for the glory of Christ.

Think what this may mean, for example, in the choice of a profession. How often a young man asks, and a young woman too, for that matter, "What am I going to get out of this profession or that?" "With what will it provide me, with money,

with ease, with honor?" And so, in choosing a calling, the thought is always uppermost, "What will it mean for me?" And for this reason many who are called into some special service for Christ never offer themselves. Oh, self is so subtle that you may discover that even when you have decided that you are not going to let such considerations be uppermost, but you are only going to think of the glory of God, yet when decisions are made you find yourself deciding for self. Our deceitful, wicked heart will trip us up every chance there is if we are not on our watch.

Also, when the Holy Spirit is making room for Himself, He not only shows us the sinfulness of sin, but He leads us to Jesus. Again and again He brings up before us the vision of Him who bore our sins in His body on the tree and who has promised us that in Himself we are to have victory over our sins. He shares with us that blessed peace which Jesus promised should be ours when He said, "Peace I leave with you." And also when He said, "In the world ye have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." As He leads us into that sweet communion with Jesus, He also takes away from our hearts the burdens and the anxieties that may come to us when we discover how subtle and how wicked our evil nature is. He shows us that

we may deliver the self-life to Christ, and "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

So He gives us victory over sin by leading us away from trusting self to Christ. He gives us grace to confess to Jesus that our many failures are caused by our trusting in self rather than fleeing to Christ with our difficulties. Then as we all through life continue the battle with sin we learn by experience that there is a shield of faith with which we can defend ourselves when temptations come, and that there is a sword of the Spirit with which we are able to battle against even Satan himself and win victories over him. Thus did Christian, when he in his pilgrimage was led into the valley of humiliation and met that horrible fiend with whom he fought for a whole day, until he was almost down and out. Then, strengthened when he again saw his sword which he had dropped, he grasped it and assailed his enemy and won that glorious victory over him and sang his praise to Jesus who had helped him to overcome that foul fiend. So Luther also sang, "One little word o'erthrows him."

Finally, the Holy Spirit, in making room for Himself will also lead us more and more into that blessed communion with Jesus in which we know, not only that He is present in the Word and Sacraments, but also that He actually is in us and has taken His abode within our hearts, so that we, too, may experi-

ence what He promised the disciples when He said, "If a man love Me he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." (John 14. 23.)

Light on the Way

"I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8. 12.

"But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things." John 14. 26.

"Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth." John 16. 13.

From these passages we can see that the "life in His name," is a life lived in light, a life in which we are to be taught the will of God by the Holy Spirit and guided into the doing of His will. Here surely is a very practical question for the Christian, "How shall I know the will of God?" "How shall I be enabled to do His will?" It is not so difficult to theorize about it as it is to carry it out in practice. And how many a time has not a child of God had to stop and wonder, "Well, what is God's will and how can I know God's will?"

Now, there are some things that I am sure all ought to agree upon concerning the will of God that are clearly taught in the Word of God. *God has a will for us in everything.* Jesus did the will of His

Father perfectly and He said of Himself, "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father doing." He believed that there was a will of His heavenly Father in everything. And then Jesus has said to us, "Apart from Me ye can do nothing." By which I think He is teaching us that there is a will of God for us in everything, even what we may call the very least.

After the resurrection of our Lord, when the disciples were out fishing and had fished all night and caught nothing, you remember that in John 21 we are told that in the grey light of the dawning, Jesus stood on the shore, and having greeted them, He said, "Cast your net on the right side of the boat." There was a certain side of the boat where it was God's will that they should cast the net. Now, we might have said, "What difference does it make whether it is on the right side or the left side of the boat, it is all one place anyway." If they had cast the net on the left side of the boat they would not have caught anything. There was one side of the boat where it was God's will they should cast the net.

Then, too, I am sure we are all willing to recognize that *God's will is sovereign.* I should therefore not ask God, "Why is this Thy will?" If He is my God and I have recognized Him as such, then His will must be sovereign. How often we are tempted to question God as to the reason for His will. He

does not need to tell us the reason. And when we ask why, it shows that we are not really trusting God.

Also, I think we can agree that *God's children ought to do God's will.* There ought not to be any question in their minds whether or not they shall do the will of God when it is revealed to them. "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me."

Then too, we may say that *it is always best for God's children to do God's will.* Circumstances may be such that it is possible for them to make a choice in this or that thing according to their own will, but they will also miss a blessing. The loss will be theirs.

And finally, I am sure that we can all agree that *God would not ask us to live in accordance with His will if He were not willing to reveal His will to us.* And that is what Jesus has told us in these passages from John that we quoted: "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things." "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth."

But even though God certainly is willing and has provided for showing us His will, there are *condi-*

tions that we must fulfill if we are going to be able to see and understand and walk in accordance with His will. Do I even need to say that it is *necessary that we really be children of God* and live in a life-union with Him if we are going to know His will? Of course, that is evident. However, it is necessary to say it, because it does happen sometimes that even those who are not children of God would like to know the will of God, especially when they are perplexed as to what they ought to do. It would be sort of comfortable to know what God's will is, especially if they then could discover that God's will was in accordance with what they themselves want to do.

We have the striking Old Testament example of Ahaz, who went up to Damascus and saw a heathen altar there, the design of which attracted his eye. He thought it was more beautiful than the altar in Jerusalem and therefore caused his men to make a copy of it and put it in the temple where the altar of the Lord had stood. Then he gave the direction that the altar of the Lord was not to be thrown away but set to one side so that he might have it to inquire by. So when he was disturbed about what he ought to do in various circumstances, then he wanted to go to that altar of the Lord and ask God about His will.

Some people have the Bible for just such purposes.

It is handy to have around if there is ever any question about what God's will might be. Not that they would daily live in accordance with His Word, but when they want to find out the will of God, you know, they can go to the Bible, open it anywhere and put a finger on a verse and find out what God's will is. People do that.

I have known people who, when they are going to do certain things they consider important, go to fortune tellers, hoping through the fortune teller to find out what is the divine will for their lives. Not that they are certain they are going to do what they are told is the divine will, but it would be nice to know that the divine will is the same as what they now want to do. Then they will surely be successful!

On account of such things it is necessary that we see that the promise to reveal His will is given only to those who are united with God in a life-union in Christ Jesus. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." No one has the promise of having God's light on his path except in and through the life that is in Christ Jesus.

But even for the children of God, those who are living the "life in His name," there are conditions for knowing the will of God, conditions that ought to be carefully observed. Learning to know the will of God ought to be and is a very heart-searching

process. If we really set out earnestly and sincerely to know the will of God in all things, we are going to find that we have to let go of so many things that we have thought were essential to our well-being and our happiness. For we are going to find that many such things are hindrances to our knowing God's will, that they are what cause us to turn our eyes away from His face and to miss the expressions in His face by which He would teach us and guide us.

We are told by Jesus that the Holy Spirit, when He would come, would convict the world in respect of sin. And we have already seen in these studies that the Holy Spirit continues to do that in the life of the believer. That is a part of the experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, if the Holy Spirit should reveal to us some sin and we should not repent of that sin, then it will not be possible for us to see and know the will of God. *Any unrepented sin is certainly a hindrance to knowing the will of God in any matter.* For if we bear within our breast the guilt of an unrepented sin and then come to God and ask God, "Show me Thy will for my life," all the Holy Spirit can show us is that sin. Again and again He will convict us of that sin. That is as far as it is possible for Him to show us God's will, for it is impossible for us to do any of God's will as long as we bear the guilt of that unrepented sin.

How many instances of that we have in the Bible! For example, in the Old Testament, when the Jewish people came to the prophets to ask the prophets concerning the will of God. God told Ezekiel once that instead of telling them of His will he should tell them of their sins. That was as much as they could then know of the will of God until they repented of their sins.

And if we should continue in unrepentance and then come and ask God to know His will, we will find that His Spirit will speak judgment to us. Instead of the peace from God dwelling in our hearts, giving us assurance that God will show us in time what is His will, that He will give us grace to walk in accordance with it, that He will guide us every step of the way and we need have no anxiety,—I say, instead of such peace from God, our hearts will be filled with sad and dark forebodings, fears of all kinds will creep in and we will feel more and more that we are walking in the dark and we do not know what is before us, nor what may leap at us from either side. And that may all be on account of some unrepented sin, some sinful habit that we may even not quite consciously be cherishing and yet are clinging to, some selfishness that we are not willing to let go and which is standing between us and God.

Then too, if we are going to be taught and guided by the Holy Spirit, it is necessary that we *be willing*

to be taught. That is, that we be willing to know what His will is, even if it should appear that God's will is *absolutely opposite* to what we had thought would be the best. For you see, as long as there lies in our hearts the desire that God's will should be what we want, that very desire is going to blur our spiritual vision so that we cannot see what God's will is.

And here again we will have to say that our hearts are so subtle that oftentimes we have not even been willing to become conscious of that we are clinging to some of the things of our own and holding tenaciously to them, unwilling to be shown that they are not in accordance with the will of God. Oh! I have certainly seen that in the lives of many of God's children and I have even seen that they have themselves not realized that they were clinging to personal ideas and notions so tenaciously that it was not possible for God to show them His will. His will was going in an entirely different direction than theirs and they were always looking in the direction of their own strong desires.

Also, if the Holy Spirit is going to teach and guide us, it is necessary that we be *willing to be guided,* that we be *willing to do God's will* even though it should appear that it was entirely different from what we had thought and hoped it would be. You may think, "Well, that is just the same as what we

have just stated," but no, it is different. We said that it is necessary that we be willing *to see* what God's will is, but now we are saying that we be actually willing *to do* it, to carry it out in our lives—and that gladly!

When we pray, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," I am afraid that many people think that it means that we are to suffer God's will, that we are to submit to it even though it be hard to bear. But is that what we are really praying for there? I think the Lord meant that we should pray that we might gladly do God's will, as gladly as they do it in heaven. For in heaven His will is not *borne* as something that is hard, but is *done* as something that is glorious and wonderful. And not until, by the grace of God, our own self-will has been so completely crushed that to us it would be a gladsome, joyous thing to do God's will, not until then can we really be in a position to know what God's will is.

And as a test of whether or not we really are willing to do God's will, we may look back and see whether or not we have done as much of the will of God as we now know. For surely it often happens in the lives of God's children that He has revealed to them His will but they have not been quite willing to do it. Then they have come to God again and asked for further direction in the knowing of His will, but God gives them no answer and the

longer they keep that up the darker it seems to them to be.

I believe I will share a personal experience in this matter. I remember with deep feeling a day when a group of men and women were gathered in a little room in a church in St. Paul, Minn. A whole day was spent in prayer, in asking for the guidance of God, the knowing of His will and the grace to do His will. We knew the presence of the Spirit of God in a wonderful way and at the end of the day, when we were just about ready to close our meeting, that group of men and women were led by the Spirit of God to appoint me to a task which I am now trying to carry out. It was so clear to me and to all that we had now acted in accordance with the will of God, that I could have said that spiritually, it seemed as though God had actually put His hand on me and spoken in an audible voice and said, "I have called thee to this."

I went home, told my family and friends to what I had been called and received the answer from friends, the church that I served and many with whom I came in contact, that it could certainly not be the will of God. And so I began to wonder, "Well, is it the will of God? Here is this congregation that I am serving, which I have really only begun to serve. I am satisfied and happy. It even appears as though God were blessing my work.

Souls are being saved, strengthened, comforted, helped by the Holy Spirit working through the Word. Perhaps after all it was only the effect of the emotions of that day that it seemed so clear that God had called."

And so there followed three months of desperate searching for the will of God. I sometimes went alone into the church that we had built and knelt before the altar of God there, and even went so far as to ask God to come and reveal Himself in some vision so that I would know. I even did that which I now see is sinful unless you are guided by God to do it, to open the Bible and put my finger on some passage to find out what His will was. And time and time again the passages would have absolutely no connection with what I was seeking, though I would even try to see if I could read in some connection.

Finally I said to God, "There is nothing for me to do but to go back to the day when I had light. I will go back there and I will tell Thee that I am willing to take that as Thy will." And then all was perfectly clear again. And it has never been dimmed, from that day to this, that such was the will of God. But for the whole three months that I was unwilling to do what I had seen to be God's will, it was impossible for me to see anything but darkness ahead.

I am convinced that many of God's children are groping in the dark because they have not been willing to do that part of God's will which He already has revealed plainly to them. That may even have been in some small matter, not necessarily some great thing. It may have been in some every day occurrence that we thought was not worth our attention. And yet in that part of our lives we have been disobeying what God has shown to be His will and therefore made it impossible for God to further show us His will in other matters, and not only to show us, but guide us into the doing of His will.

So then, let us take this with us, that the "life in His name" is the Spirit-taught, Spirit-guided life and that this truth is a deeply heart-searching one.

Looking for the Light

"Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him." John 11. 9, 10.

This, you see, has reference to knowing the will of God and walking in accordance with His will. Jesus had evidently already ascertained that it was the will of God that He should go to Bethany and raise Lazarus from the dead. His disciples tried to dissuade Him. He answered that there is a day for God's children and that if they walk in the day, by which He no doubt means God's will for them, then they are in the light and they will not stumble. Nothing can then happen to them but what is for their good and to the glory of the name of God.

In fact, Jesus was immortal as long as it was God's will that He should live and work. No one could kill Him then. And the same is true for the children of God. Nothing can kill them as long as God wants them to live and perform some service to the glory of His name. We can walk with fullest confidence when we are walking in God's day. The

danger is to walk in the night. That is, to be out of God's plan for our lives. Then is when we stumble. Had Jesus remained where He was and not gone to Bethany, then He would have been walking in the night.

Now, in ascertaining the will of God, *it is necessary that we seek to know His will.* Jesus had evidently sought His Father's will in this matter. That is revealed quite plainly later on when He stood at Lazarus' tomb, for then He spoke to His Father and it appears that He was simply continuing the conversation that He had had with His Father before, for He says, lifting up His eyes, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest Me." He had talked this over with His Father. He had received from Him the assurance that He should go to Bethany and that when He came there He would be given the power, the authority to awaken Lazarus from the dead.

We, too, if we are going to ascertain the will of God, must make a spiritual effort to know God's will in each circumstance. In this connection, I want to warn you of the danger of trusting to sudden inspirations, (hunches, we sometimes call them). You so often meet people who are so ready to claim that they know the will of God in every circumstance. When you inquire upon what they base such assurance, you so often hear, "Oh, I feel that way. I think God's Spirit has told me that that is what

should be done because I feel so and so." Now, those feelings are always dangerous because they are so often deceiving. The fact is that your feelings go so much by what you like and what you want and therefore lead you astray. Perhaps you have heard of the young man who was praying for God's guidance in the choice of a wife. He said, "God, Thy will be done, but I must have that certain girl." He was going by his feelings.

Do you remember the story of Christian and Hopeful in Pilgrim's Progress, when they were wandering along on the way that had been pointed out to them, which led to the Celestial City? Christian spied a path running through a meadow and it seemed to him that that path would be so much nicer to walk on than the road on which they now were. And he said, "It must surely be safe to walk on that path, for you can see, can you not, that the path runs in exactly the same direction as the road." And so he and Hopeful climbed the fence and got over on that path and it seemed so nice and easy to walk on. Do you remember into what difficulties they came? Night came upon them and the darkness, strange and terrifying sounds, storms, lightning and thunder and water. When they tried to retrace their steps so that they might get back to the road, they found it well nigh impossible, in fact, they were stranded there. And in the morning who

should come but Giant Despair and imprison them in his castle, just because Christian had a hunch that the path would be so much nicer to walk on than the road.

I say again, our feelings are so often based upon what we want. I remember well an experience I once had when I thought surely I was making a certain request of God in accordance with His will. I felt absolutely sure that it was God's will that I should make that request and that He would answer. God never granted that request. The time for granting it came and passed and then, of course, I realized that it would not be granted. That caused much self-examination. Why had I been so sure that it was according to God's will? And I discovered that it was simply because I wanted it so badly. And when I began to look into it with the light of the experience of being refused the request, I realized that I had actually asked God to even stop the laws of nature just simply for my own personal benefit. It would not have glorified His name at all. It might even have done me and others harm if He had granted that request, but at the time when I made it I felt that it was what I needed and what God would grant. I felt thus because I wanted it. So then, let us be careful concerning these inspirations, these "hunches." They often are will-o-the-wisps instead of the light of God shining on our

path. Especially is this so when we have not been making a serious effort to ascertain His will.

In making an effort to know the will of God, I think we should rather make use of our reason, for God has given us a reason to use and He has promised that since He is dwelling in His children,—and you will remember, of course, that only those who are the children of God can expect to be guided to know His will—He has promised that His children shall have an enlightened reason. And so we should seek to fill our mind and heart with the Word of God, in which we learn to know His will, and yield our reason to the Word in every instance, thereby receiving more and more from God the gift of a reason that can look at things in the light of God's Word.

And so, we ought to examine our situation in the light of the Word of God and see what our reason tells us is the application of God's Word upon our personal situation. In that exercise we will grow in wisdom. I must not expect that I shall immediately be just as wise in applying the will of God to circumstances of my life as the one who has done that many, many times and who has grown experienced in applying the will of God to the special circumstances.

However, when we use our reason we ought not to depend upon it entirely. We ought to remember

that God is not limited by human reason. That "His ways are not always our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts." His ways and thoughts are far above ours.

It seemed perfectly reasonable to Joseph that he should put Mary away when he discovered that she was with child, but God's will was that he should take Mary to himself as his wife. Entirely opposite to Joseph's opinion.

It seemed perfectly reasonable to John the Baptist that Christ should have baptized him instead of he baptizing Christ. But God's will was that Jesus should be baptized of John.

It seemed perfectly reasonable to the disciples that Jesus ought not to go up to Bethany when He had just recently experienced that the Jews were trying to stone Him, but it was God's will that He should go.

Therefore, as you use your reason, seek God in His Word. Learn to know what kind of a God, God is, by seeing Him in His Word. There you will find how God has dealt with other individuals in every conceivable circumstance of life and God does not change. God's view of things is exactly the same to-day as it was in the days of Abraham, of Joseph, of Paul. His judgment of things is the same to-day. What was wrong then is wrong now. I mean now in general, in principle, and therefore by studying

the Word of God you will find out how God thinks and how He lays the plans for the lives of His children.

And while we thus seek to know God in His Word, we should also lay our own perplexities before Him, all the time telling Him what the problem is and asking Him to shed the light of His Word upon it. And that we should always be doing in every circumstance of life. For such praying you will find much help in the Book of Psalms. There the children of God ask Him for guidance. They lay their perplexities before Him and they speak their assurance that He will guide them and show them His way.

There may appear to you to be just one of two things to do. Tell God that then. Tell Him there is this and there is that, what shall I do? Oftentimes as you pray over the Word of God and tell Him so, He will show you that neither of the two is His way. He may say to you, "How are you so sure that there is just this or that to do? I have all along planned a third way for you that you never seem to have thought of at all." Oftentimes such things occur to us when we are laying our perplexities before God in prayer as we study His Word.

And then the most important thing that I have to say in this matter: *Wait for God. Wait.* It is not true that you have to be in such a hurry. Often-

times it is the flesh, the world and the devil that are pushing you so hard. It is not wrong to wait for God. He has promised to guide His children and if I do not know what is His will and I have examined my life to see that there be no unconfessed sin and no disobedience to His revealed will in my life in the past, then I have a right to wait, and to tell my God that I will wait for Him until He show me what His will is.

As long as I do not see clearly what is the next step to take, then, instead of examining the ground at my feet and trying this and that and the other thing anxiously, I ought to just stop and turn the look of my heart into the face of God so that I may see His eye, since He has promised to guide me with His eye upon me.

And, in the meantime, while I wait for His guidance, looking unto Him, let me do the thing that lies next at hand to do. For I am convinced that oftentimes God's children are anxiously seeking to know something from God just because they are not satisfied to do the most natural thing that lies right near at hand. It probably is something that is unpleasant and difficult for them to do. Therefore they are anxiously seeking to know whether or not it might be God's will that they should go off and do something else.

Wait for God! Those who are living the "life in His name" need not despair. Christ is in them, and when they wait for Him they are not waiting for someone who does not have any interest in them, nor for someone who is far away and has to take time to be informed about their situation. They are waiting for One who is dwelling within them, who knows all their needs and who is sharing with them His own life.

The Guidance of God

The inner processes of life are always difficult to describe, sometimes impossible to describe. Now, ascertaining the will of God is one of the processes of the "life in His name" and therefore is really difficult to describe. God does not let down some sheet before us upon which there is printed in letters that we can see with our naked eye what is His will in this or that circumstance, nor does He even bring to our mind's eye some vision by which He would direct us. He can do such things and He has done them in unusual circumstances, but they are not the normal and usual way by which He directs us and guides us and shows us His will.

In Christ we have life. The Holy Spirit dwells in us for Christ's sake and He guides and directs us from within to know the will of God. In general, however, we can say that the process consists in this, that we prayerfully and obediently study the Word of God so as to learn to know there what is the general will of God. There is where He reveals Himself and in the measure that we obey His will as we find it in His Word, we are also going to be given the wisdom and the understanding to apply

God's will as revealed in a general way in His Word to the special circumstances of our own individual life.

That, you see then, will be a gradual process. It will be an education, a training. You have to go to school to learn to know the will of God and how to apply His will to the individual circumstances of your life. And the school is the school of experience in reading the Word, in praying over the Word, and in yielding your will to His as it is revealed there in the Word.

But there are some things that we can say in a general way about knowing the will of God and how God reveals His will to us. I call your attention to this passage to-day:

"Father, glorify Thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath spoken to Him. Jesus answered and said, This voice hath not come for My sake, but for your sakes." Jn. 12. 26–30.

I think we can see that when God reveals His will to us, *He does it plainly. He can* do it plainly and *He does* do it plainly. Many examples do we have of how God revealed His will to His children in the Bible.

When He was to lead the children of Israel through the wilderness, He led them by a pillar of fire by night and of cloud by day, so that His guidance would be perfectly plain.

When He revealed His will to Pharaoh in dreams He gave a series of dreams which meant the same thing. It was made perfectly plain and clear that there was to be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine.

Gideon was led to ask God for a sign, you remember. He asked at one time that the ground might be all dry and that the wool that he placed out on the ground might be wet with dew. And you remember that not only was the wool wet, but that Gideon could wring water out of the wool, whereas the ground was perfectly dry. That sign was also reversed. When God granted the sign, He granted it so plainly that there could be absolutely no question in the mind of Gideon as to whether or not God had directed by that sign.

In this connection I do not say that we should ask God for outward signs by which to be guided, for we have something much better than that. We have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. For we must always remember that we, who live on this side of Pentecost, are having a wonderful privilege. We have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. If we believe we are in Christ and are saved, we have

dwelling within us the Spirit, whom Christ has said will lead us, guide us and teach us. I want to assure you that it is much more wonderful to be guided by the Spirit than to be guided by a piece of wet wool on the ground.

However, if God could guide plainly and clearly when He gave such outward signs, surely His intention is to guide plainly and clearly when He guides us by His Spirit. But *His guidance is plain and clear only to those who are observing.* What may be a clear voice from heaven to one, is only a thunder to someone else.

Consider that passage from John. There Jesus was asking for guidance. He was asking, "What shall I pray?" "What shall I say?" He decided to say, "Father, glorify Thy name"—and the voice from heaven came, guiding Him and telling Him that that was the right thing to pray. "I have both glorified it and I will glorify it." Jesus said afterward, "This voice hath not come for My sake, but for your sakes." Jesus heard the voice, He heard the words, He knew what was said. Some thought an angel had spoken. They were at least enough spiritually inclined to think of angels when they heard the sound. However, they evidently did not hear what was said or they would have known from what was said that it was the Father's voice. Still

others said *it thundered.* They never even thought of angels!

So, no doubt, even though God is speaking plainly to reveal His will to many of His children, they do not hear His voice because they are not listening for it. To them God's voice is only a noise. They are not tuned in to God's broadcasting station. Their hearts are tuned to all kinds of other things than the mind and heart of God.

For example, you live all day long and every day listening continually to your own desires, giving yourself to the carrying out of your own will. You listen to the will and the desires of the world and yield to them. Then you come to a special circumstance in your life when you feel, "Here I must know the will of God. I need to know His will." And you begin to cry to God to reveal His will. But you have been detuning your heart in the manner of your living and therefore when God speaks, His voice goes right by you. You never hear it at all. Or, if you do hear something, you do not recognize it as the voice of God. You called it thunder and perhaps were even afraid of it, whereas it was God's voice guiding and directing.

David was once told that when he heard the footsteps of the marchers in the tree-tops, that was to be the sign for him and his army to set out against the enemy. Now, to the casual observer, no doubt

the sound in the tree-tops would have been the sighing of the wind. But to David, who was accustomed to listen to the guidance of God and who was tuned in to the heart of God, when he heard the sound, it was the marching of the army of God, which his should follow. So I say, God can and does reveal His will plainly, but it is plain only to those who have learned to observe.

Then, too, *when God reveals His will He does so one step at a time.* He has never promised that He will throw a searchlight before us that will at once show us all the way to the goal. He has promised that His Word shall be a *lamp* unto our feet. Now you know that a lamp, when you carry it, gives you just enough light to take the next step, but if you do take the next step, then again you have enough light to take still another step; and if you but keep on going and hold on to the lamp, you have light enough for the whole way. But you must keep moving. That is, "While ye have the light, walk in the light." If you do not, something else is going to happen, darkness will overtake you. *Your lamp will go out before you reach your goal!*

One step at a time. That is all we need to know. Even though you and I have thought, "I must know what the consequence of this step is going to be," that is not true. It is unbelief that says so. Faith says, "If God has shown me this step, it makes no

difference what the consequences might be. I can do it because God has shown it to me." We may liken God's promises to His hand, which He reaches out to us when we stand at the edge of a precipice of decision. And He says, "Now step on My hand, and then I will take you over." Faith steps on His hand, even though we may see an awful abyss beneath, believing that God will also provide for the next step as we need the provision.

You find so many examples of this in the Bible, how God has guided His people one step at a time. Jeremiah was once told that he should go down to the potter's house. He was not told why he should go or what would happen when he got there. Oh, I am convinced that many of God's children have been told to take one step along their way and because they did not know why they should do that, refused to do it and missed a meeting with God. When Jeremiah went to the potter's house, God showed him there a wonderful message that he was to bring to the people. God could not have used Jeremiah to do that if he had not been obedient to the call of God that said he should go down there without even knowing why he should go.

Remember how God led Mary and Joseph, when they were caring for the infant Jesus, one step at a time. He told them to go to Egypt. He did not tell them how long to stay there. But when the right

time came, He told them to go back, but did not tell them to what city they should go, only to Judæa. But when they came to Judæa, there they were told that they should go to Nazareth.

And so He guides us one step at a time. This is for our training, so that it will be, first of all, proof that we are worthy to receive more light, having obeyed the light that we did receive; and then, that we will learn how to walk in that light that He gives.

The most difficult part of all to speak about is how we see this light from God, how we come in our inner being to the assurance that we have now been guided by God. Perhaps we could put it this way. As we go on seeking the light from God, asking for guidance, there is one thing that stands out more and more clearly in our minds, in our inner life. When we pray we are led to pray most about that. When we think of the decisions to be made, we feel most free in the direction of that certain decision. When we think of deciding something else, there is no liberty within so that we can say, "I will gladly do it." There is rather a question, "Do I dare to do that?" However, in the matter of this one direction that is standing out more and more clearly, we become more and more sure within us that there we can step gladly and freely. It may be dangerous to step there, but that does not matter because there is where Christ is going to be with us. It may be hard

to do, but that does not matter either if Christ is going to be with us there. Our heart is free and glad to go there, while in all the other directions we are shut out.

In order to arrive at such liberty of action it is necessary that we watch the circumstances. They are to be studied. You will find that as you wait upon God for His guidance, circumstances oftentimes hedge you in on every side so that there is only one way that you can go. That is why it is so important to wait for God, to give Him time to arrange the circumstances, for when God deals with us He is dealing with creatures who are living in time, and therefore God also takes time. So I say, watch the circumstances. See how they will shape themselves, and how, in the midst of them there will be a clear, open way for you to go.

I think we may also ask for the advice of friends, especially if they are Christian friends, who are willing to examine the circumstances in the light of the Word of God and pray with us over them. However, I think in asking the advice of friends as to what we ought to do and what may be God's will, we should never take their word as final, no matter how intimate the friend may be. For the most intimate friend is Christ, and His Word is the word that must be final, and no other friend must be permitted to take His place. Especially will I say this, that if, in prayer to God in the seeking of His will in the

Word, I have already been led to make some decision in faith, then I would be very slow to change that on account of the advice of some friend.

The question always arises whether God also now, as formerly, guides men by dreams and by visions. I do not doubt but what God can and that He sometimes does. But I do not think that it is the normal way for God to guide. I think it is unusual and, for my own part, I would be very slow to act on the basis of a dream. I would not act on the basis of a dream unless I had also seen with my waking thoughts that that was very clearly in accordance with the will of God revealed in His Word. The dream could only be permitted to be guidance in this, that it corroborated what I saw to be the will of God in the Word. But for my own part, I would rather let dreams alone. They are such uncertain things and they are made up of such strange quirks of the imagination and many times are so foolish and so ridiculous that even though a certain dream may seem to be a wise dream, it may after all, if seen in the light of reason enlightened by the Word of God, be just as foolish as many other dreams.

Another way that some people have of being guided by the will of God is to ask God to hinder them in the way in which they are walking if that should not be the will of God. They say, "God, I am going to do this now and if it is not Thy will, then hinder me from doing it." Well, even the

earnest, sincere Christian may sometimes be so pressed that he may make a request like that of God. But that, too, I doubt we should use as the *usual* way of ascertaining the will of God. The trouble with that is that God may indeed answer our prayer and put hindrances in our way. But if we have already decided that we are going to go a certain way, we do not see God's hindrances, especially if our own desire is strong to go in that direction. God may put one hindrance here and one there, and because of our strong desire, we leap right over the hindrances that God has put in the way.

But you say, "What if the circumstances are such that I have to make a decision immediately? I have not time to wait for God to show me plainly and clearly for I am pressed and time is an element. The decision must be made within a certain time and it is not clear to me what God's will is. What shall I then do?"

In such a case I think I must go to God and confess to Him that this doubt in which I now am, this darkness, is the result of my own inattention to Him. That I am failing to see His will because of my short-sightedness in spiritual things. I must also then confess to Him every known sin, be willing to have His Holy Spirit reveal to me everything in which I have grieved Him and disobeyed Him, and then say to Him, "Even though it now is dark on every side and I have come to the time when I must

act, *I shall have to step out in the dark and ask Thee to care for the consequences.*"

Then God will do either one of two things. Either He will so direct us that we put our feet in the right place even though we do it in the dark, or else He will permit us to make a mistake. But if we are honest and sincere He can turn even the mistake to good, so that, whereas we made the wrong decision, He, recognizing our sincerity of purpose, can lead us, through that wrong decision, into something that is good for us. And here, too, we will find that it is true that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

Therefore, no Christian needs to be in a spirit of fearful anxiety about whether or not they are arranging their life according to the will of God. Here we should, by the grace of God, cultivate that glad, cheerful faith that God will reveal His will at the time that it is necessary to know it, and therefore we may be glad every day of our life. And when despairing thoughts want to overwhelm and Satan comes to tempt and says, "Now you are not living according to the will of God and now you are not a child of God"—then let me say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Let me be glad in the assurance that my Saviour is with me to guide me both by day and by night, for day and night are all alike to Him. "I am with you and shall be in you."

Bearing Fruit

We have seen that the "life in His name" is the Spirit-filled life. We may add now that the "life in His name," being the Spirit-filled life, is an overflowing life. God does not fill us with the Holy Spirit simply for our own satisfaction, but if He is going to be glorified in us and through us then the Spirit's influence in us must also flow out through us. So that is why Jesus said,

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water." John 7. 37, 38.

And these rivers will flow out into a desert of sand around about us, but it will be manifest in the sand that the rivers are there by the verdure that will spring up.

Jesus uses another figure in John 15, where, instead of rivers that flow out, He speaks of fruit and tells us that the "life in His name" is a fruit-bearing life. And He shows us in that passage that the fruit that we bear has reference to God and to man. Towards God we will bear fruit in prayer, in a life of communion with Him, and towards man the fruit will be manifested in love.

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, and so shall ye be My disciples. Even as the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you; abide ye in my love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. This is My commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you."

All life must express itself. That is just as true as that all life must have nourishment. When life is kept from self-expression it dies. And certainly this is true of the "life in His name." It must express itself. It must breathe. And in expressing itself towards God it breathes in prayer. Towards man it breathes in love.

Look now at this, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Now, I am sure that we who believe in Christ, are all ready to admit that when God has given a promise He will absolutely fulfill that promise. Otherwise He would not be faithful, He would not be God. Sometimes He has given promises modified by conditions. I am sure we will all be willing to admit that God, being God

and being righteous and holy, will fulfill the promise when the condition is fulfilled. Here we have a promise modified by a condition. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you"—that is the condition. "Ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you"—that is the promise.

Now, when we look into our lives and our experiences in Christ, will we not all have to admit that we have asked so many a thing that we wanted but that it was not done unto us? Will we not also have to admit that many times when that has happened, we have sought some explanation for our not receiving God's answer in God, rather than in ourselves? Have we not been quick to suggest to ourselves, "Well, God did not grant what I asked because He had something better to give me than what I asked," and then leave it there? Or, we say, "God knew that it was not good for me that I asked for this and therefore He did not give it to me," and we leave it there. Or, we say, "Of course, He means that it must be according to His will that we ask and I must not have asked according to His will, therefore He could not give me what I asked. And of course that was not any fault of mine because no one can really know the will of God in everything, can they? His will is secret and hidden and He is sovereign and has a right to decide Himself what is best. That is why my prayer was not answered."

But I wonder if such reasons are not just simply circling the real reason, which is nothing more or less than that we have not fulfilled the condition and therefore God could not fulfill the promise. And, oh, how we would advance in the experience of the Christian life if we would only admit and confess our part in the failure.

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you." We ought to notice that Christ does not say, "Ask according to My will," but He said, "Ask whatsoever ye will." How could Christ give such a promise? How could He dare to tell men that they might ask whatever they wanted to ask and He would do it? Because He has given a sufficient condition, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you."

Now, if we, in living the "life in His name" towards God in prayer, have made requests that are not according to the will of God and therefore cannot be granted by Him, then that teaches us that in those requests we have not been abiding in Him and His words abiding in us. The secret of our failure is that once again, as so often, our life has moved around the center which is self, instead of around the center which is Christ. Now, that is the explanation of all failure in Christian life, whether it be in living the life amongst men or whether it

be in living the life in prayer and in intimate communion with God. Every failure in the Christian life is explained by this, that self was permitted to rule instead of Christ.

If we would only confess our sins in this, not only that we have sinned, but also confess to God the reason for our sin, then we would be crucifying self. Certainly it hurts God when we fail, whether it be in the prayer life or in any other sphere of the Christian life. I am sure our failures grieve Him, but I also feel sure that it hurts Him still more that when we have failed we refuse to see the reason for our failure. We will not permit the Holy Spirit to show us that it is because we are still catering to self, and Christ is not enthroned in our hearts.

Oh, if we would only judge self hard! If we would only step on self! If we would only wipe our feet on self and hold self down, by the grace of God! And nothing holds him down so much as when I get down before Christ upon my knees and lay self bare and admit everything about self. Then self is receiving death blows. Then we may also experience more wonderfully what Jesus means when He says, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you."

"If ye abide in Me." We have pointed out in these studies that when we have been convicted of sin, the Holy Spirit's purpose is to lead us to the point where we will see that in self we are absolutely lost

in sin. Where we will see that it is absolutely impossible for self, by anything that we may do, to ever extricate ourselves from the situation that we are in on account of sin. We have never been truly convicted and converted until we have realized how desperately we are lost, until we have realized that no amount of praying, no amount of Bible reading, no amount of good works or good intentions of any kind will save us, we are so desperately lost. We will have to go to Jesus and admit that we are lost and ask Him, for His mercy's sake, to save us. Then we are in Christ. Then the Holy Spirit unites us with Him. Then we have become converted and become like little children, as helpless infants, who are willing and ready to receive grace and mercy from God.

But now Jesus says, "If ye *abide* in Me." By which He then means that my continued experience should be that I trust thus in Him always for my salvation. As long as I hold the attitude, that "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," but that in Christ is my salvation," then I am abiding in Him.

Now those who have not experienced what Satan and the flesh and the world can do, might say, "Well, that ought to be easy, when you have once accepted Christ, to continue to thus abide in Him."

Life is never easy, not with such enemies around as Satan, the world and our own flesh. For we will be tempted very quickly to again rely upon "my goodness, my prayers, my religious life," and so on. And it really is remarkable what things self can find to take pride in. Why, I have even heard sinners say of themselves that they no doubt were the worst kind of sinners that there ever had been and that others were not quite as bad as they. So that self was even priding itself in having been worse than others. Still on the throne! Oh, how subtle and wicked and evil our hearts can be!

But "if ye abide in Me," remaining in Christ, remaining always that lost, helpless sinner in myself that must have Jesus, on the one hand. And then on the other, "My words abide in you." "If ye abide in Me"—that stands for salvation; "and My words abide in you," that stands for surrender. That means that the saved one surrenders his will to Christ's will and that there never any more can be any question about whose will shall be done, his or Christ's. Now, when we read this and think about it, I do not doubt that we all feel, "Well, surely I am willing to take that stand and attitude in my life, that it shall never be my will any more but always Christ's."

But here again we have our subtle heart to deal with. For our heart will often try to make it out

to the satisfaction of our conscience that our will is Christ's will, because we are looking at our will and our desires so much that they are like a bright, glaring light shining into our eyes, which makes it impossible for us to see God's will.

You know our desires are just like searchlights that men make, that can so glare into your eyes that, having looked at them you cannot even see the stars in heaven. And yet the stars in heaven are so much brighter and so much more wonderful than the little lights that men make. And so, when we look at ourselves and want things so badly, we can finally get so blinded by our desires that we cannot see that they are not in accordance with Christ's desires. Therefore I say, that it is one thing to say that we are willing that Christ's word shall abide in us, that we shall never want anything or do anything that is contrary to Christ's will, but it is another thing to practice it.

Oh, how we need the grace of God! You see when that is perfectly practiced,—when I lie as a helpless sinner at the feet of Christ and my will is completely surrendered in every little thing to His will, then He can say to me, "Now you ask whatsoever you will," because in that condition I could not want anything but what is first wanted by Him.

Now I do not think that this is a relationship to Christ that we can step right into and know per-

fectly in one step. Life is growth and I believe that this is an experience into which we will have to grow. Therefore, we ought not to feel despairing or discouraged if we begin to realize that, "I have not been fully abiding in Him and letting His words abide in me." No, that should the more drive us to Him, calling upon Him for more grace to recognize that the failure lies in having yielded to self and in not believing that He will be the supply for all our need.

"It shall be done unto you." And then He says right away, "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be My disciples." The "life in His name" is a life of prayer. The purpose back of that life of prayer is that the Father might be glorified by our bearing much fruit.

All the prayer promises are so heart-searching. Here again this searches you out and asks you, What has been the motive of your praying? What has been back of your requests? Have you thought of your advantage? Have you thought of your comfort? Have you thought of your peace? Have you thought of your joy? Even when you have asked for the things that are according to the will of God, even when you have asked for blessings upon the work of the Lord in which you perhaps are interested, what was the motive? Was it that God might be glorified? Was that what in your heart con-

strained you and drove you to make your requests that God might be glorified, no matter what it cost you? Even if it costs me my ease, my comfort, my peace and my joy, my friendships, and all the circumstances that might be pleasing to me in this world, am I yet willing that no one but God should be glorified in the answer to my prayer? How heart-searching this can be.

Think of what might lie back of your praying, even for the salvation of some other soul. A mother is praying for the salvation of her son. Why does she want her son to be saved? Is it so that she will have peace and comfort in her own heart and not have that continual agony and sorrow over a lost boy? Or some young person is praying for the salvation of a sweetheart. But why do you want the sweetheart saved? Is it so that you can have peace and comfort in your relation with that sweetheart? Just think, God may not be able to answer your prayer and to use your praying for the salvation of that soul just because your motive is selfish even when you are praying about such a wonderful thing as the salvation of some soul. "Herein is the Father glorified." That is to be the purpose of everything we say and do in the "life in His name."

The New Commandment

According to the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel by John, prayer and love are the two great fruits that Jesus looks for on the branches of the Vine. Jesus emphasizes prayer and love, because He knows that if the branches are bearing those fruits they will also bear *much more fruit.*

To-day we want to think about the fruit of love. Let us consider Jesus' own words:

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

"This is My commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do the things which I command you." "These things I command you, that ye may love one another."

Jesus says that our love one to another is to be the proof to the world that we really are His disciples. The world looks for love amongst Christians and has a right to expect to find it. Of the early church it

was said by those who were outside, "See how they love one another." I have often wondered if it could not be said about the church now by those who are outside. "See how they 'scrap' with each other."

And Jesus also looks for love. That we keep His commandment to love one another is to be the proof to Him, as well as to each other, that we are His friends. Jesus says several times, "this is My commandment, that ye love one another," which teaches us then, that love is obedience to Christ's command.

That, perhaps, brings up a view of love that is not often thought of. Most people seem to have the idea that love is a kind of feeling that you have towards others. It is also a kind of feeling that you do not have much control over, for you feel love towards some and you do not feel love towards others. And you really cannot help yourself, can you? It sort of drops down on you.

But Jesus says, "My *commandment* is that ye love." It certainly ought to reveal to us clearly that love is not a matter of feelings but of the will. For with what do you obey Christ's commandments, with feelings or with the will? Of course, obedience is by the will. And therefore this love that Jesus speaks of is not in the feelings but it is in the act of the will, namely, that I decide to obey Christ in this that I give myself to live for others. I think just having that cleared up would clear up much about

love and many of the problems of love in the minds of many Christians.

Of course, love is followed by feelings, because when we obey Christ in this, that we love one another, it goes so deep into our being that our feelings are influenced. It can and does bring us the greatest of all joy. For as we learn to give our wills in love, we enter into the life that Christ lives more and more, and that is joy and peace.

Also, love may certainly be followed by the feeling of great sorrow. Because if we are going to live a life of love as Christ lives, we will also be sorry for those who are astray. We will know something of the suffering of the love of Christ as He suffers over the lost. So you see, love is not all pleasurable feeling. There is no suffering as deep as the suffering of love.

An attitude of mind and will then, that is what love is. That is: What do we want in our hearts for others? Do we wish everybody well? That is the main thing. We are so often concerned about the deeds and the words of ourselves and others, and it is true that, if we are going to really love, we must love in deed and in truth and not in word only. But do you not see that if we have the right attitude in our hearts towards others, if we are always wishing everybody well, blessing everybody, praying for God's blessing to come down upon them, then our

deeds and our words are going to be right? Watch your heart. That is often more important than your hand and your lips, for what flows from your hands and your lips depends upon what is in your heart.

If, by the grace of God, we learn to live a life of love, we shall find that not only are other people blessed by our loving them, but it is going to react most wonderfully upon ourselves and it is going to be the most wonderful power that there is to drive all kinds of selfish sins from our own heart. Paul shows this in what he tells us about love in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Just look at it!

"Love suffereth long." Therefore, if the love of Christ is in our hearts, all impatience will be driven out. If I am yielding to the sin of impatience against my fellowmen, that proves that I have been failing in love. Now, tell yourself every time you find yourself impatient, "It must be that I am failing in love."

"Love is kind." Therefore, of course, it drives out all unkindness from our hearts. When you have an unkind feeling toward anyone, then tell yourself, "What I have failed in is love. If I loved, then I would not have the unkind feeling."

"Love envieth not." Therefore, it drives out all jealousy. There is no room for jealousy in the heart when love fills it.

"Love vaunteth not itself." Therefore, there can be no boasting, no self-assertion, from the lips of the

one whose heart is filled with love. And here it perhaps ought to be remarked that boasting does not always come out in crude language that everybody can see and understand as boasting, but often it is clothed in very attractive language, which still is boasting.

"Love is not puffed up." And so, when love fills our hearts, all pride must go. Therefore, you see that when I have sinned in being proud, it is because I have not loved enough.

"Love does not behave itself unseemly." Therefore, when my heart is filled with love I cannot act foolishly. Folly goes out of my heart. Perhaps you do not think it is sin to be foolish, that it is only a weakness. But the Bible calls it sin and you remember that when Jesus gives that awful list of sins which He says the human heart is full of, He includes foolishness.

"Love seeketh not its own." Therefore, when love comes in, selfishness goes out. Then you do not always consider "what it means for me" in this or that circumstance, but, what will it mean for others. Not, "how does this affect my situation," but, "how does it affect everybody else?" Now, if I am always thinking about *my* situation, then I ought to tell myself, "I am failing in love."

"Love is not provoked." Therefore, of course, when we love, then all petty anger and wrath must

go out of our lives. Oh, how often you hear Christians say, "I was so provoked at this and that and the other thing." Mother and father are provoked at the children when they do not obey. Brothers and sisters are provoked at each other. Friends get provoked at each other. They have failed in love. If there was love they would never be provoked. There would not be room for provocation.

"Love taketh not account of evil." Therefore, when my heart is filled with love, I cannot brood over wrongs that may have been committed against me or that I may imagine have been committed against me. And if I feel myself brooding over real or imaginary wrongs, then I am failing in love. Love does not count on evil existing at all.

"Love rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth." When love comes in there cannot be any of that unholy joy that even Christians may sometimes feel over the failure of someone else. Because, you see, someone else's failure is a wonderful thing by which to contrast my successes. But when there is love, there cannot be any such unholy, devilish rejoicing.

"Love beareth all things." And so all complaining is gone when love fills the heart. A devout woman once wrote thus:

"In my own family I try to be as little in the way as possible; satisfied with everything and

never to believe for a moment that anyone means unkindly towards me. If people are friendly and kind to me I enjoy it. If they neglect me or leave me, I am always happy alone. All tends to my one aim—forgetfulness of self in order to please God."

"Love believeth all things." And so all mistrust goes when love fills the heart, the mistrust that ruins fellowship so often. But, you say, can you really trust everybody? Well, love is never going to be disappointed. In the end, when we see things from the other side, we are going to find that we never were fooled by loving to the extent that we believed all things.

"Love hopeth all things." And so, when love comes in, despair and anxiety and despondency goes out.

"Love never faileth." I think we ought to understand this in two ways. As long as there is love there can never be any failing. If there are failures in our Christian lives, it is because we have lacked love. Also, love never faileth, because God is Love. He is the source of love and when we have tapped that source of love, then love can never run out because it has an inexhaustible source.

Now, there is nobody that has this kind of love in himself. I am fully convinced that anyone who will honestly mirror himself in the thirteenth chapter of

First Corinthians, as well as in the Gospel by John and Epistles of John, will have to bow in deep humility and conviction of sin and say, "I have failed so miserably in the very elementary fruit of love that Christ wanted to find on this branch of the Vine." And, of course, the only way to overcome and to have our hearts filled with love is to admit that we have failed.

Now, if in reading this, your heart rises to your own self-defense and you do not really like to give in to some of these things, then do you not see that you are hindering the Holy Spirit from carrying out the work in your heart of showing wherein you have failed? Oh, let us assume this attitude towards Him that we will let Him show us! Let us be willing to see everything in which we may have grieved Him and certainly whether or not we have grieved Him in this, that we have failed in love. And then let us honestly confess that we have failed to love because we did not want to love.

And then, too, He is the only source of love. He could say of Himself, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." He was the only one who could do that. It is not possible for any human being to lay down his life instead of the life of his friends, as is meant in this passage. It was possible only for Jesus Christ to do that because He had a perfect life to

lay down instead of our lives. But it was not only possible for Him to do it. He wanted to do it and He did it.

And if we want our hearts filled with love, we have to keep on looking at Him. Looking *to Him* and permitting His love to be shed abroad in our hearts, opening up our hearts to His love, contemplating and considering how He loved us when He laid down His life for us and is willing to call us His friends.

And if we only become very humble at the foot of His cross in realizing our own failure and in realizing His infinite love, then His love is also going to fill our hearts so that we can love God and man in Him. "For herein is love, not that we have loved God, but that He has first loved us and given us His Son."

The Heavenly Home

"Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14. 1–3.

The "life in His name" is eternal life. Certainly that means that it has its source in God's own eternity. And what we have been praising God for in our studies concerning this life has been that we may even here in this world share God's eternal life. I think we need to emphasize the fact that eternal life is begun here on earth, but we also need to remember that eternal life is not finished here. If it be true that "life in His name" has its source in the eternal life of God, it is just as true that its goal is to live on eternally with God.

How may we dare to have such a hope as that? Jesus says, "Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me." There was indeed occasion for the disciples to have troubled hearts in view of the announcements that Jesus had been mak-

ing to them, that one of them would betray, another would deny Him, He would be delivered into the hands of His enemies and would be put to death. That would almost take the heart and courage out of anyone. But Jesus says, "Let not your hearts be troubled,"—for beyond all this lies the glorious purpose of God, which He will fulfill and carry out and the aim of it is nothing less than our sharing the eternal glory with Him at home in heaven. And He gives Himself as the surety for it. "Believe in God, believe also in Me."

Notice then that He tells us in this passage of the place where we are to live with Him in the future of the eternal life. "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." "*My Father's house.*" That means home, and all that home stands for. By this word Jesus would have all His followers realize that they are not at home while they are still here on earth. He would have all the magic of that word "home" to draw their hearts. He would have them understand that if they have ever experienced anything of the joy of home here in this life, that should only be for them a suggestion of the home that He has for them in glory. Even though they may have a happy home here, they should not permit their hearts to become so attached to that home that it, in their mind and

heart, should ever eclipse the glory of that home that He is telling us about.

And, if it should be the experience of a child of His that they have no home here on earth, then He would tell them that that should not cause their heart to be troubled at all, because no one should really have a permanent home here on earth. Their home should be in heaven, if they are the children of God. They should never feel that, "Here I have finally found my home," so long as they are upon this earth. But if we have a home here, it should be only a type and reminder of the home that He is preparing for us there.

"*My Father's* house." How you can just dwell on each one of those words. If it is *my Father's* house, then it is also *my* house. It was Jesus' house, you see, and because it was Jesus' house, He also could open the doors of that house to His children. It has often been said, and it is worth repeating, that it would be well for Christians to be a little homesick once in a while. We become too easily satisfied with life in this world. It can also be said in this connection that it is the testimony of God's children that the more they continue to live in God and in Christ, and all which that implies, the more often their thought keeps going home, the less satisfied they are with remaining here and therefore they keep look-

ing towards that day when they are going to be at home with Him there.

Of this home He says, "In My Father's house are many mansions." *It is a royal palace.* It is going to be a home such as we have never imagined. If it is true of our experience in this life as Christians that "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the hearts or minds of men what God has prepared for those that love Him"—for I believe that this is spoken concerning the Christian's experience in this life—it certainly is true of what God has prepared for them that love Him in the life to come.

"Mansions" means that everything that we possibly could need will be fully and richly and gloriously supplied. And we need have no doubt that this is really going to be so, for Jesus says, "If it were not so, I would have told you." You see, He gives us Himself here again as surety that it really shall be so. If there is no such home for us to go to, then Jesus has been a liar. And we who know Him as our Saviour know He cannot lie.

He also tells us in this passage of the preparation that He made for us there. It is by His work that such a place has been prepared and it has been prepared for us. So He says, "I go to prepare a place for you." Here, too, every word has its deep significance. "I go." What did that mean? His death,

His resurrection, His ascension. He went to the Father by way of His sacrifice. It was His going to the Father by way of the sacrifice that was to prepare a place. If Jesus had gone into heaven from the Mount of Transfiguration, when God said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and when He then permitted Him for a little while to enter into His glory, there would have been no place prepared for us. But from the Mount of Transfiguration Jesus went down into Gethsemane and to Calvary, and from Calvary He went home again to His heavenly Father. And because He went that way home, there was a place prepared *for you.*

"A place *prepared* for you." There was no place for men in the house of the Father until Jesus, the perfect Man, entered there. I think there lies more in that statement than you will observe on the surface of it. Sinful man could not come to God. There was not even a place for those who had died in faith, at the throne of God and in His presence, until Jesus, the acceptable sacrifice, was admitted in His resurrection body into that home. There were some who were raised from the dead at the time of His resurrection, some special ones who, for some reason or other, were to be presented along with Christ as the first-fruits of the resurrection. But the mass of those who are dead, even having died in Christ, have not yet entered into all that is meant by "a place

prepared for you." At present their souls are with Christ, and their bodies sleep in the earth. But Christ has prepared a place, not only for their souls, but for their bodies too. For we are also to remember that our Brother Jesus is soul and body with God in His house. And so there is a place also for our soul in its resurrection body to share Christ's glory with Him.

We are also to note here that Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place *for you.*" That is the purpose of that place. The only ones who can fill that place are the men and women for whom He died. If each one does not fill his own place it will be empty. Angels cannot fill it. It is a place prepared for you, and of course the thought comes back to us when we say that, "Just think if my place should be empty there."

Jesus also tells us of the reception that we are to look forward to when we come to that place. "If I go to prepare a place for you, I come again and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He is coming again! Just as surely as He died and returned to heaven, just so surely will He come again a second time, apart from sin, not to die, but unto salvation for them that wait for Him. Just as surely as by His death, resurrection and ascension, He prepared the place for us, just so surely will He come again and lead all His own into that place.

Note how in this sentence He Himself is the One who shines forth. Not "we" but "He." *I* will come again. Then *I* will receive you unto *Myself*. The important thing is not that we are going to be received, but the important thing is that *He* is going to receive us unto *Himself*. For in glory, if never before, it is certainly going to be made plain to us that it is Christ that is going to be glorified, even in our glorification. It is not we who are going to be glorified for the sake of our own glorification. "He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be marveled at in all them that believed." 2 Th. 1. 10.

Therein lies a very practical hint as to how we should live our life in this world. Even here now we should begin to learn that everything in our life should be for Him, and whatever He works out in life, He does not work it out for our benefit alone but for His glory. Of course, His mercy and blessing is such that what is for His glory is also for our benefit. But so many Christians seem to have the attitude that it must be for *my* blessing, for *my* benefit, that God is going to do all His work. Their life is self-centered and therefore they miss so much of the blessings. Whereas, if their life be Christ-centered, then they will see that whatever God is working out in their lives, it is to the glory of Christ, that Christ might be magnified in them and through them. And that shall be perfectly done when we

share His glory in eternity. Then He is going to be glorified in all them that have believed. And they are going to be glorified in Him.

"I will receive you unto Myself; *that where I am, there ye may be also.*" There you have the longing of the heart of the Bridegroom. His desire is to have His bride with Him. "That they may be with Me where I am," He prayed of the Father. Here also is suggested that the God-given desire of the bride shall be not just to get to heaven because heaven is glorious and wonderful, but to satisfy the desire of Jesus to have us there with Him. So that my reason for wanting to go to heaven shall not only be that I may have all those blessings, but more especially that my coming there may satisfy Him who died to prepare that place for me.

The Blessed Hope

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14. 3.

Think of that promise in connection with Jesus' prayer to His Father, "And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them . . . Father, I desire that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me."

Together with these passages, I also want to call your attention to the following:

"And when evening came, His disciples went down unto the sea; and they entered into a boat, and were going over the sea unto Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. And the sea was rising by reason of a great wind that blew. When therefore they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they behold Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the boat: and they were afraid. But He saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. They were willing therefore to receive Him into the boat: and straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going." (John 6. 16–21.)

"And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." (Rev. 1. 17, 18.)

Again from the Gospel by John, the twenty-first chapter. "Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; who also leaned back on His breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth Thee? Peter therefore seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me."

And from the First Epistle of John, the third chapter: "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is."

The "life in His name" will be consummated, will have reached its glorious goal when Jesus comes in glory. We have already seen how He has promised to take us home, assuring us that He has prepared a place for us. And He has told us that He will take us home when He comes again in glory.

He tells us also that His coming is sure and certain. Just as surely as He went away, departed from this earth and ascended into heaven, just so

surely will He come again in like manner as His disciples saw Him going. That has always been the faith and the hope of the Church of Jesus Christ. And it also has been a fact that as long as that has been a lively hope, the Church of Jesus Christ has been used of God to the glory of Jesus' name in a special way. It has been observed in the history of the Church that when the hope of His coming has been dimmed in the hearts of His followers, then also all their life and work has suffered.

John does not record in his Gospel the addresses that Jesus gave in which He in detail promised His coming again. The reference to His coming again in the Gospel by John is rather indirect, as you have noted, and no doubt the reason for that is that John was to have the privilege of writing a whole book which would in detail set forth everything concerning Christ's coming again. However, there surely are wonderful references here to His coming again.

His coming is sure and certain, even though it be delayed. Read that little portion from the sixth chapter of the Gospel in which we see the disciples in the boat in the storm on the sea. Now I do not say that experience was a prophecy. But I do think it is an illustration and as an illustration, it pictures the condition of the Church of Jesus Christ in this

age and how Christ will some day come to His Church.

Notice that it says here that *Jesus had not yet come to them,* even though it was dark and it was stormy. Does not that suggest His delay? Does it not suggest that they sort of wondered why Jesus did not come, why He was not with them to help them in this difficulty?

Jesus had not yet come to them. And can we not also take it and apply it to the condition and the situation of the Church to-day? Now the Church has passed through these many and very heart-searching, sometimes heart-rending, experiences of the past centuries, always saying and announcing to the world that Jesus is coming again. And that hope of the Church is scoffed at by the world. Yes, even people within the Church, believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, are tempted to question whether or not Jesus really meant that He was coming again in the way we have understood it. Can we not then say, "Jesus has not yet come unto them"?

But notice that He does come here and He comes when it is dark and when the storms are blowing, and when the disciples are most helpless.

Jesus has warned us in other portions of Scripture that that is just exactly what is going to happen in the world; that the forces of evil will gather themselves and that the storms of opposition to the gospel

of Jesus Christ will break; that in this world we are to have tribulation; that we are to expect to meet a world that is hostile to the gospel of Jesus Christ and that if we do not meet the hostility of the world we should even examine ourselves to see whether or not there be something wrong with our profession of Christ. And the storms will gather and the darkness will be worse. That does not make a Christian a pessimist. It forewarns the Christian so that, when he sees these things come to pass, he does not become dejected, but, according to the word of Jesus, he "lifts up his head," for it tells him that his "redemption is drawing nigh."

Perhaps in the very midst of the storms Jesus will come. And it is to be observed that when He came He immediately dispelled all their fear. "It is I, be not afraid." They then were willing to receive Him into the boat and immediately they were at the place whither they were going. Was not that remarkable? A minute before they had been out in the midst of the sea in a storm of such severity that they were unable to cope with it. As soon as Jesus entered into the boat they were at the place whither they were going.

And so shall it be when Christ comes. Then we shall immediately be at the place whither we have been going all the time, where we have longed to be, for we have His assurance that then we shall

meet Him in the air and "so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Read the passage from the twenty-first chapter concerning Peter and John. It suggests to us the two conditions in which His saints will be when He comes.

He has told Peter in plain language that it was to be his lot to die for Christ. Peter, seeing John following, wants to know what his lot shall be. Jesus' answer is, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

John tells us that the report went out that he was not going to die but that he was going to live until Jesus came. But John himself did not so understand this statement of Jesus and therefore reports that Jesus did not say that this disciple was not going to die, but He said to Peter, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

John saw that Jesus was teaching Peter that He is sovereign over the fate and destiny of His followers, that Jesus has the right to decide whether His disciples shall live till He come or whether they shall die and thus glorify His name.

This brings out the teaching that some of Christ's followers will live till He comes and will not taste of death, but as Paul tells us so clearly, "will be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" and be changed from the mortal to that which is

immortal, while the dead in Christ will be raised from the dead. Paul also tells us the order in which that will occur. He says that the dead in Christ will rise first. We shall not "prevent them," that is, we shall not go ahead of them. They will rise first when Christ's voice sounds down into the graves.

Remember the word of Jesus in the fifth chapter of the Gospel by John, when He says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth"; in their order, in the way Christ wants them to come forth, first those who have died in Christ. They then will come forth in their resurrection bodies and then the living saints be "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" and "together with them be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

His coming is not only sure and certain, but it is also glorious. Then will be answered His prayer when He asked the Father in the assurance that it was in accordance with the will of the Father, "Father, I desire that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory."

It shall be a glorious appearing. There will then be revealed to those who believe in Christ such a glory as they have never imagined. Therefore, of

course, it is impossible for us to describe that glory in words. John saw Jesus in glory on Patmos. When he came to describe the glory that he saw, he had no words to describe it. He had to use the words that we know and understand and it is quite evident that they do not convey to us by far what John saw. For it is possible to read that description of Jesus with perfect calm and without any result such as we see in the life and experience of John.

He says that when he saw what he describes there, it affected him so that he fell as one dead. That is how glorious it was. But when we see Him in glory we shall not fall down as though we were dead, because He will prepare us by giving us the resurrection body in which we can look on Him.

The results for us shall be as John says in his Epistle. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is."

"We shall be like Him." Note just that sentence. Have you really thought into that? Have you ever really prayed over that, asking God to show you something of what that means? "We shall be like Him." That is to be the result of His being manifested in glory.

Why has Jesus given us these promises? What should be our attitude now while we are in this life

and waiting for the fulfillment of these promises? Should we do like so many fanatics have been doing in ages past and are doing to this very day? Decide that Christ is going to come at some certain day and hour and do all sorts of strange things in preparation for that coming?

I cannot believe that that is what Jesus meant. John says, "Everyone that hath this hope set on him, purifieth himself even as He is pure." Our Lord has intended that this promise of His coming again in glory should have some very definite results upon our lives. Instead of causing us to give up what we are doing in this world, it should cause us to be more faithful in the doing of it if it be according to His will.

In other portions of Scripture He has said, "Blessed is that servant whom the Lord findeth so doing when He comes." Nothing could please Him more than to find His servants working and laboring for Him when He comes. And the nearer the day approaches for His coming, the busier His servants should be.

At the same time, however, that they serve, they should also examine themselves, and as John says, "purify themselves." In view of that I am going to meet Him in glory, and that is to be the consummation of all He has done for me, how gladly I should

let go of anything that in any way might be displeasing to Him while I still remain here.

How even Jesus' own followers cling desperately to the things of this world! It is just as though men were clinging to ashes and dead leaves and sticks the while Jesus says, "I have diamonds to give you." Surely we should be glad to let go the ashes and the leaves and the sticks in order that we may have hands that are clean and open to receive what He is offering.

And only those hands that are purified from the things of this world can be stretched out to take what Jesus is offering when He says, "I come again."

Daily, down through the ages, there has been rising from the hearts and lips of those who live the "life in His name" the fervent response, "Amen: come, Lord Jesus."